

John Gay Engl. Theatre 1729
No FOOLS like WITS:

OR,

The Female Vertuosoes.

A

COMEDY

As it was ACTED at the

Theatre in Lincolns-Inn-Fields.

OR,

The REFUSAL:

OR,

The LADIES Philosophy.

As it is ACTED at the

THEATRE ROYAL in Drury-Lane.

*Impartial CIBBER now does freely own,
"There's no Imposing WIT upon the Town;
His Title, not his Play, we set to Sale:
If Patch-work pleases, MOLIERE's Sense can't fail.*

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for E. CURLL, at the Dial and Bible against
Catherine-Street in the Strand. **MDCCXXI.**

(Price 1s. 6d.)

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T O

Mr. C I B B E R.

S I R,



HE happy Talent you have
 acquired of NATURALIZING
 French Plays, and the Ro-
 man Spirit you possess of
 ADOPTING English ones,
 will certainly entitle you to no small Share
 of Immortality.

A 2

Moli-

*Moliere and Corneille * will be your Vouchers for the former, and Shakespear, Beaumont, Fletcher, || and some Living Authors, for the latter of these laudable Qualifications.*

As the Roman, who was betrothed to a Spouse Homely and Barren, generously provided for the beautiful Offspring of some necessitous Brother Citizen; so you, maturely considering the Hereditary Poverty to which Poets are born, have by an unpresided Example, and the most extensive Charity, liberally maintained several of the Children of the above-mentioned Writers.

For my part, I esteem it as the greatest Happiness in being the Recorder of your Fame, and this last Act of Bounty to Moliere is the chief Motive of my undertaking so difficult a Task; but

Jaeta est alea--- and so to the Point.

* Tartuffe. *The Cid.* || Richard III. *The Custom of the Country. The Elder Brother, &c.*

*You know, Sir, Moliere's Femmes Scavantes; or, the Learned Ladies, appeared first upon the Queen's Theatre in the Year 1693, under the Title of, The Female Vertuosoes, and was acted with Success: It has been likewise this Season revived at Lincolns-Inn-Fields, under the Title of, No Fools like Wits; nor indeed did Nature ever produce a more egregious Coxcomb than the Reviver; who to honour Moliere, has blended the Miser * and the Generous Man || to form a New Character, but such a one as can only be called Monstrum & Horrendum.*

You have indeed done Moliere a Piece of much more exemplary Justice; for when I came to the Theatre with my Head crammed full of agreeable Ideas, I found you had taken all his Characters; tho', by the bye, your bringing a South-Sea Director into an honest Family, is like grafting a Crab upon

* *L'Avare, de Moliere.*

† *Chrisalus in Les Femmes Scavantes.*

a Pippin. After having paid for your Refusal, heard your Ladies Philosophy, and considered of your Stock ; upon being asked by a Friend, What the Entertainment was like? it is like, says I, (knowing your Modesty) a Sampler, whereon Monsieur Moliere's STITCHING may easily be perceived from Mr. Cibber's CANVAS. Then recollecting a lucky Simile of our old Friend Mr. Cleaveland, I declared of your whole Performance, that

*There's no Imagination that can strike it,
'Tis so like NOTHING, that there's NOTHING like it.*

I am, S I R,

From my Shop over-against
Catherine-Street in the
Strand, Feb. 15. 17²⁰/₂₁.

Yours, &c.

E. CURLL.



To the Right Honourable

CHARLES,
Earl of Winchelsea.

My LORD,



ERE we to judge of Men by the *Dedications* of this Age, we should have now as many *Heroes* as ever fought for the Conquest of *Troy* and *Carthage*, as many *Politicians* as ever sat in the Senate of *Rome*, and as many *true Wits* as ever flourished in the Times of *Augustus* : But such is the fulsome and lavish Flattery of our mercenary Writers, that it is almost become a
Reproach

Reproach to a Patron to be commended ; for while their common Topicks of Praise, applied right or wrong, make all alike, What Rule can we go by, to make a Difference between a Coxcomb and a Man of Merit?

Having therefore so studied your Lordship, as to be satisfied, that you *hate* Commendation as much as you *deserve* it ; I shall forbear imposing upon your Patience and Modesty with a large and methodical Account of your own Virtues. I leave to the World the Pleasure to find 'em out ; they are too many to be concealed long ; and too great, not to be admired as soon as known.

And without the Ceremony of a tedious Apology, I crave your Lordship's Patronage for my FEMALE VERTUOSOES ; the Design of which was drawn some Years ago from (MOLIERE) the great Original of *French* Comedy, by an Ingenious Friend of mine, who bears now too serious a Character in the World, to reckon such a Trifle among his
Delicta

The DEDICATION. iij

Delicta Juventutis, was last Winter, by my Importunities, extorted from him.

I shall not tire your Lordship with an Account of some frivolous Objections raised against this First Essay of mine, by the factious Demi-Wits of the Town, who judge of a PLAY, not by the standing Rules of Art, (for those they never understood;) but by the narrow Fancy, or mere Caprice, of some conceited Fops whom their devout Ignorance adores, as Oracles of Sense and Ingenuity.

I shall only take notice to your Lordship, That the nice and more judicious Sort of Criticks, whose Approbation only, a Writer should value, have observed, That my *Vertuosoes* stretch in their Projects beyond the Limits of Nature and Reason; I do here, with the Candor of an Author not yet hardened in the vicious Habit of Scribbling, freely own, it appeared so to me at first; but having, besides some modern Poets, *Aristophanes* for a Pattern, I thought that what diverted the Ancients, might meet with some Indulgence from our *English* Audience.

B

I am

iv *The* DEDICATION.

I am sure the *Athenians* could laugh to
see no less a Man than So-
crates exposed upon their
Stage, for contriving a ridi-
culous Way to measure the Jump of a
Flea; but we are grown serious, and
cannot relish Fooleries: I submit, only
desiring my Judges to remember, that a
Poet may challenge it, not only as his
Excuse, but his Privilege, to carry some-
times a Jest beyond the Bounds.

- - - - *Liberius si*
Dixero quid, si forte Jocosus, hoc mihi Juris
cum venia dabis.

Horace.

I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most Humble,

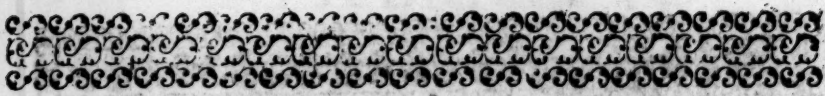
and most Devoted Servant,

Tho. Wright.

PROLOGUE,

Written, and Spoken by Mr. DOGGET.

ENrag'd to find you never will come near
The Theatre, but when New Plays are here;
I'm come to tell you with a serious Face,
Loathing of Wit still shews a Want of Grace.
The Time has been, when Sense has so prevail'd,
That of full Houses we have never fail'd,
The Boxes fill'd with Beauties, and the Pit
Was croud'd every Day with Men of Wit;
The Galleries serv'd for poor unthinking Cit.
Side-Boxes stow'd the Masks, and keeping Cullies;
And the Stage kept us free from Beaus and Bullies.
There was some other Vermin up and down,
But they for fear of losing Half a Crown,
Prepare for flight, like Owls at Evening Dawn,
And take to Wing before the Curtain's drawn,
Leaving us here to talk to empty Benches:
You, to the Whores, and Fools, to Orange-Wenches.
This makes me speak, these Grievances o'th' Age,
The Poet's Bane, and Ruin of the Stage:
The fatal Cause that makes me look so Thin;
'T has left me nothing on my Bones but Skin:
My Legs with Pain my Body long has carry'd,
I'm grown so weak—some cry—He's surely marry'd;
As if there was no other Plague, but Wife,
To make a Man a weary of his Life:
We have a greater Curse to pull us down,
In being forc'd to please a barbarous Town,
Who damn all Wit, but what they call their Own.



EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. CATCHAT.

I Try'd to leave You, Gentlemen, in vain,
The rest are gone, but I'm return'd again;
And that you're pleas'd, my Vanity discovers,
I'll set you all down in my List of Lovers;
And think you so, whate'er Defence you make;
Nay more, I'll prove it for my Humour's Sake,
That none are Happy, but through some Mistake. }

The fairest Nymph that thinks sh^e's gain'd a Heart,
And does her Favours, with her Smiles, impart;
Whilst here the Spark practises all his Graces,
Ne'er thinks, alas! they're levell'd at New Faces;
Still cheated on by his perfidious Eyes,
She vainly fancies, 'tis for her he dies.

The Elder Ladies too, of past Renown,
Have their Mistakes; Stale Fortunes of the Town
Think there's no Lord but might ha' been their own. }
And, slighting Lovers of their Fancy born,
Starve for that Blessing they affect to Scorn:
At length despis'd, turn Censurers and Nice,
And boast of Virtue, 'cause unfit for Vice.

You, Rising Suns, who see their dreadful Fate,
Take Warning, Marry e'er it be too late,
For Youth's the surest Charm to Captivate. }

Our

EPILOGUE.

*Our Author too, for who so Vain as they,
Would needs believe that you Approve his Play;
E'en humour him for once, and give him Cause,
Warm him but with the Fire of your Applause.*

*Then, if again his Muse her Voice shall raise,
Yours be the Merit, yours be all the Praise;
You make the POET, He, but makes the PLAYS.*



Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Sir Maurice Meanwell, an honest rich Citizen. } *Mr. Underhill:*
Meanwell, his Brother. } *Mr. Hodgson.*
Sir Timothy Witlefs, a Country Gentleman. } *Mr. Bright.*
Witlefs, a Cambridge Scholar. } *Mr. Dogget:*
Sir Maggot Jingle, a Parasitical Knight, } *Mr. Bowman:*
 pretending to Poetry. }
Clerimont, a Gentleman of the Town, } *Mr. Powel.*
 in Love with *Mariana*. }
Engross, a Scrivener.
Trap, *Mr. Witlefs* his Man. } *Mr. Bowen:*
 Pick-pockets.
 Bully. } *Mr. Haines:*

W O M E N.

Lady Meanwell, an imperious Wife, } *Mrs. Leigh.*
 and a great Pretender to Wit. }
Lovewit, *Lady Meanwell*'s Daughter by }
 a former Husband; an Admirer of } *Mrs. Knight:*
Platonick Love, yet in Love with }
Clerimont. }
Mariana, *Sir Maurice*'s Daughter by a } *Mrs. Bracegirdle:*
 former Wife. }
Catchat, *Lady Meanwell*'s Sister, a stale }
 Virgin, who fancies every Man is in } *Mrs. Mountfort:*
 Love with her. }
Lucy, *Mariana*'s Maid. } *Mrs. Rogers:*

Scene, L O N D O N.

Thus Cibberiz'd.

M E N.

Sir Gilbert Wrangle, a South-Sea Director. } Mr. Pinkethman,

Granger, in Love with Sophronia. Mr. Booth:

Frankly, in Love with Charlot. Mr. Wilks.

Witling, a Conceited Fop. Mr. Cibber.

Mr. Delay, a Lawyer.

W O M E N.

Lady Wrangle. Mrs. Bicknell.

Sophronia, her Daughter, in Love with } Mrs. Oldfield.
Granger.

Charlot, her Sister, in Love with Frankly. Mrs. Booth.

Lady Wrangle's Maid.

A Cook, and other Servants.

5. 1. 1943 - 20. 1. 1943

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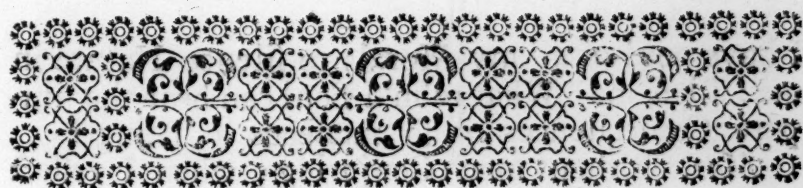
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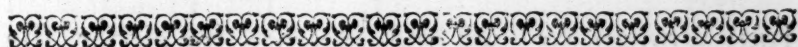
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NO FOOLS like WITS:

A

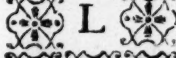
COMEDY.



ACT I.

SCENE, *Sir Maurice Meanwell's House.*

Enter *Lovewit*, and *Mariana*.

Lovewit.  LOOK ye, Sister, if you have
 L a Mind we should live ci-
 villy together, pray not a
Word more of that mon-
strous filthy thing Marriage,
Foh!

Mar. Not of Marriage, Sister? you jest sure.

Lov. Oh for Shame forbear! Can Flesh and
Blood hear the Word, and keep within Bounds?
The very Sound of it leaves such an Impression
of Filthiness and Obscenity in the Mind, that
B I have

I have need of all my Morals to silence Nature in me: Bless me! What refin'd Soul can bear the impure Consequences of so nauseous a Thing?

Mar. Without much Conjuring; when I reflect on Marriage, all I can see in it, is a dear Husband that will love me, pretty Children that will play about me, and a House of my own to manage: And, for my Part, I cannot perceive what there is in any of these Things which offends Decency, or shocks good Manners.

Lov. Jesu! That one born with a Spirit, capable of sublime and lofty Things, should foolishly limit her self to the Enjoyment of so mean, and so despicable a Creature as Man!

Mar. Believe me, Sister, 'tis not Prudence in frail Woman, to Huff and Hector; for either she yields in Time; and then how insultingly does a Man triumph over her conquer'd Pride? Or if, to the last, she can boast of the venerable Title of Virgin, Does not the satirical World ridicule her Wildom, and mock her Singularity? Till almost choak'd with Vapours, and devour'd with Spleen, she makes in Policy a poor shift to rail at Men that scorn her; and grudging to the Young the Joys she has out-lived, she pines away with Envy, and dies a fretting Martyr for a reproachful Cause.

Lov. Poor Soul! How deeply is the Spirit in you immersed in the foul Abyss of your Senses. Go on, pretty Miss, please your self with fond and airy Notions. But know this, That if there be Fancy in your Choice, there is Judgment in mine. To Philosophy, not to a Man, do I give the Empire of my self; I scorn to yield to common Laws, and to make that Reason a Slave to Mankind, which kind Heaven imparted free to me.

Mar.

Mar. This is Heroick indeed : But, pray good Sister, with all your Wit, can you answer me this Question ? What sort of Figure had you made in the World, had your wise Progenitors always been wrapt up in lofty Speculations, or musing upon musty Books ; had they never condescended to talk familiar Things, and now and then discours'd plain Nature together ? Well, since I cannot be a Wit my self, I'll try to beget Wits, and to stock the World with little Doctors, that shall propagate Learning to all Generations.

Lov. I pity you, poor Sister : But pray, since you are so very fond of that ceremonious Piece of Ruin, let's hear at least, who is the worthy Object of your Inclinations, ——— I hope not *Clerimont* ?

Mar. Why not *Clerimont* pray ? Does he want Merit ? Is his Estate so mean ? or, is there any Thing in his Person should make one blush at the Choice ?

Lov. I do not say there is ; but you cannot be ignorant that he is mine already by right of Conquest.

Mar. Lord, Sister, must then so vast, and so sublime a *Genius* as yours, limit it self to the Enjoyment of so mean a Creature as Man.

Lov. Reason, which is my Guide, and not my Tyrant, does not disapprove of the Courtship of a Man of Virtue ; tho' I may hate him for a Husband, yet he may please me well enough under the Title of an Admirer.

Mar. Passionate Speeches, Fond Addresses, Platonick Gallantry, and such Toys, may feed up the Vanity of a Woman : 'But, Sister, Are you sure Love has nothing more to desire ? ;

Lov. Thanks to my Wit, I can answer for one and I should make a sad Example of the daring

Mortal, that should attempt to rifle the precious Magazine of my Chastity.

Mar. But after all, What Assurance have you that *Clerimont* is yours?

Love. Surely, after a Thousand Declarations of his Love, I think, Sister, I may rely upon his Sincerity in spite of Rivals. [*Enter Clerimont.*

Mar. I do not love to boast; but if you have a mind to try it, here comes one shall decide the Quarrel. Come in *Clerimont*, [*to Cler.*

and without any Fear, or Partiality, disclose your Heart. My Sister challenges your Love, and I flatter my self I have a right to it; let's see in whose Favour you'll declare your self.

Lov. I am not so fond, Sister, of a publick Declaration, as to put any Man I value, to the hard Extremity, either of Dissembling, or Disobliging: the One is as unworthy of a Man of Honour, as the other is against the Rules of fine Breeding.

Cler. No, Madam; my Heart, incapable of dissembling, does not scruple to own an Engagement which is the pride and Happiness of my Life: Fair *Mariana's* Charms are such as will easily justify the greatest Passion in the World.

Lov. But can those mighty Charms, Sir, be a good Excuse for Baseness and Infidelity?

Cler. Do me more Justice, Madam; and impute to your self the blame of Inconstancy: 'Tis that stiff and imperious Carriage of yours, that cold Indifferency you affected upon all Occasions, and your high boasting of the tyrannical Empire you exercis'd over me, have at last open'd my Eyes, and restor'd me to the Use of my Reason; and can you now complain, or—

Lov. I

Lov. I Complain ? No Sir, you mistake me ; my Resentment would make you proud, and fancy that your Heart was a Conquest worth my keeping.

Mar. Now, Sister, here's a Scope for your Philosophy with a vengeance : sum up all your Morals to your Assistance ; let's see if you can look upon a happy Rival with a Stoical and Undaunted Mind.

Lov. You triumph, Sister, in your pretty Looks, and pleasing Smiles, and think of Insulting, perhaps too soon ; feed your easie, deluded Soul, with empty Dreams of Pleasure : Your Happiness is not so great, as to deserve my Envy —

— Nor perhaps so certain yet, as not to leave me some Prospect of a Change. [*Aside, and as she is going off.*] *Exit.*

Cler. However she may endeavour to disguise it, I am satisfy'd, she is not a little offended at the Sincerity of my Declaration.

Mar. But I am pleas'd with it ; and without the labouring Task of two years Love you have bestow'd on her in vain, I give you leave to think me not Ungrateful.

Cler. Still as you speak, my Love discerns fresh Wonders ; and to that free and generous Temper, so opposite to the little Artifices and Dissimulation of your Sex, do I resign all the Liberty your other Charms have left me.

Mar. Mistake me not, *Clerimnt* ? I set as high a Value upon the Modesty of our Sex, as the best Moralists of 'em all ; but yet I see no reason why we should keep a Lover at such a distance, when we are once satisfy'd of his Worth and Sincerity ; since all the Incense after that exacted, serves only to gratifie the two great Idols of our Souls,
Pride

Pride and Vanity, and gives no real Satisfaction either to Reason or Reputation.

Cler. Nay, proves often a piece of Policy very fatal to the Proud and Scornful of your Sex; for their Vanity forcing thus a pining Lover to spend his whole Stock of Love in Courtship, the Consequence of it, is, That he has none left for Marriage.

Enter Lucy to Clerimont and Mariana.

Lucy, Oh, Madam, I am quite out of Breath!

Mar. What's the matter now, *Lucy*?

Lucy, The Matter? only Treason, High-Treason plotting against you Two within.

Cler. I dare lay a Wager, your Sister's Jealousie has been at work.

Lucy, 'Tis even so; I never saw her Philosophy so ruff'd before.

Mar. But what was the Result of it, *Lucy*? How did her Wife her Witty Mother take it?

Lucy, You know her Way; she has always more Sentences in her Mouth than Teeth.

Cler. But still let's hear a little.

Lucy, With a furious train of her bombast Expressions, and a flood of Latin, which, for aught I know, was all Swearing or Conjuring, she did just now, in her Tone of Authority, pronounce, That *Mariana*, the Undutiful *Mariana*, should have no other Husband but Mr. *Timothy Witlefs*.

Mar. Don't you tremble, *Clerimont*, at the Name of your Rival?

Cler. No Rival, Madam, can seem dangerous to me, after your last Assurance.

Lucy, No; on my Conscience, you need not fear Him.

Cler. But

Cler. But how came you to know that Property, Mrs *Lucy*?

Lucy, I have seen the Coxcomb at *Cambridge*: he was noted there for a mighty Boaster of pretended Favours; and one could hardly name a Woman to him, but he had had the luck to lie with.

Cler. A Scholar on my Word.

Lucy, Nay, he courted me once most fiercely; but I dreading Matrimony then, a little more than I do now, sent him packing to his Grammar: Upon this, what does my mere Scholar do, Sir, to be reveng'd of me, but use me just as he does his Books; for so he quotes every Day Passages out of 'em, which he never read, so he boasts of Favours of mine he never enjoy'd: ne'er trust me, if I have not a Month's Longing, to serve him a Trick for his Impudence.

Cler. We'll join with you, Mrs. *Lucy*, I promise you: But first, Is the Man Easie? May we venture to play upon him?

Lucy, The Man, Sir, is an exact Tool for our Purpose; a good harmless Booby; so very honest that as he carry'd no Wit to *Cambridge*, so he has the Conscience to bring none from thence: A dull lumpish, low-spirited Ninny, who is contented to be a Fool by Nature, and wants the Skill of our modish Sparks to make himself a Fool by Art,

Cler. However, he must be remov'd; for in Matters of Love, a Fool is as troublesome, as a Witty Man is dangerous.

Lucy, I'll be content to Die a Virgin, if I do not accomplish it for you.

Cler. Look to your self, pretty Mrs. *Lucy*: You could not have bound your self by a greater Curse.

Lucy, Then judge your selves: --- My Brother *Trap*, who waits on him at *Cambridge*, in the manifold

fold Qualities of Gentleman, Foot-man, and *Valet de Chambre*, sent me word last Week, That his worthy Master was soon to set out for his Matrimonial Expedition: --- He is famous for merry Tricks and Frolicks; and I dare answer for his Zeal, or be bound Body for Body, that he'll be true to the Cause.

Cler. I desire no better Security.

Mar. This falls out as luckily as we could wish.

Lucy, I'm inform'd that he is expected to day; I'll send for him, as soon as I hear he is come to Town, to Consult with him, and set his Wits at work.

Mar. Then let's every one to our Tasks immediately: *Clerimont*, my Uncle *Meanwell* is your Friend; you may try his Interest for my Father's Consent.

Cler. Trust, Madam, to my Love for obeying a Command, on which all my Happiness depends; I'll about it presently, only give me leave to wait on you within. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene Changes. *The Street.*

[*Enter Witlefs, shaking the flaps of his Coat, and making Faces — With him Three Pick-pockets, Trap with a Portmantua upon his Shoulders; Witlefs standing between Two of the Pick-pockets while the Third is amusing Trap at one Corner of the Stage.*]

Witlefs, Pox o' the Milk-woman, and my unlucky stumbling on her: She was not pretty neither: Foh! how she has daub'd me! By the University, my Cloaths have dropt as much of her Stuff, as would suckle Ten Parish Bastards.

1st. *Pick-*

1st. *Pick-pocket*, How the busie, noisie Rabble began presently to swarm about you! 'Twas a great Mercy, Sir, we came to your Rescue, they would have pull'd you a' pieces else; for that untractable Crew, set up of late for Arbitrary Avengers of Wrongs, and like greedy Birds of Prey, are always flying to Mischief.

2d. *Pick-p.* I was almost in a Fury, to see a Person of Quality so abus'd.

With. Quality! Ay, that I am; and for my Honour let it be spoken, the very First that ever was so of my Family.

1st. *Pick-p.* May I crave your Name, Sir?

With. My Name, Sir? --- My Father is a Knight, and I wou'd have the rascally Mobb to know, that he'll talk *Astrology* with 'em for their Ears: By the University, I'll send a Challenge to the Vermin, and try how much of the Gentleman they have in their Doublets.

2d. *Pick-p.* Challenge the *Mobb*? You Jest sure: The Mobb never fight; they only butcher, or knock one down, without either Method of Fencing, or Rules of Justice.

3d. *Pick-p.* I had an itching Mind to have sent
 to Trap. } halt a dozen of those Sons of Whores
 to their pocky Mothers, to make
 black Bacon of 'em.

Trap. Faith, I hate Blood-shed, and never was fond of Valour; I had rather live three Days in this pretty sinning World, than a thousand Years in History,

1st *Pick-p.* I suppose you come, Sir, to make the Town happy with your Company, for some time.

With. Truly, Gentlemen, my Business in Town, is the Business of any Place I live in; Love-
 C Intrigues;

Intrigues ; nothing else : I have of late so liberally Cuckolded the whole Body Politick of Cambridge, Mayor, Aldermen, &c. that I am forced to come up for the Relish of Variety.

2d. *Pick-p.* London is a large Field for Love; you have been here before, I don't question, Sir: Pray, how do you like the City?

Witl. The City Sir? Faith, I think the City is well enough; but Pox on't, there are so many Buildings in it, they hinder one from seeing it; wou'd they were pull'd down, we might then have a full Prospect of it.

1st. *Pick-p.* I see Sir, so honest a Look in your Face, that with an humble Apology for my Freedom, I must give you a seasonable Caution, and that is, To take heed what Company you keep in Town; and have a vigilant Eye upon any Body that comes near you; for this great City was never so pester'd with Pick-pockets, and busie Rogues, as it is now.

[All this while the 2d Pick-pocket is stealing Witless's Sword, and rifling his Pockets on one side.]

Witl. Say you so? Oh, the Villains, let me alone with them; I'll be cunning enough for 'em, I warrant you.

2d. *Pick-p.* But, Sir, what argues Impudence beyond Example? The officious Cheats will intrude themselves into your Company, upon the specious Pretence of Civility: They'll make very free and extravagant Offers to you: But, Oh, the wicked Age we live in! while one of 'em is thus amusing you with some impertinent Story, the other is very busie in rifling your Pockets.

[All this while the first Pick-pocket is rifling Witless his other Pockets of a Pack of Cards, a Table Book Papers, &c.]

Witl.

Witl. Odd'zookers! Give me but a List of the Rogues; my Father is a Justice, and I'll see 'em hang'd, every Mother's Son of 'em.

ist. Pick-p. You'll do, Sir, a mighty Piece of Service to the Nation: We'll wait on you with a List of their Names, at a more convenient Time; till then, your Servant, Sir.

[*Exeunt Pick-pockets.*]

Witl. Gentlemen, Yours——

Look to your self, *Trap*, as we walk home; for these kind Gentlemen were pleas'd to inform me, the Town is full of Cheats and Rogues; ——

Wou'd I cou'd catch some of 'em with their Hands in my Pockets, I'd presently say to my Sword, ——

Sword! Out of thy Scabbard—— [*Makes as if*

O, I am robb'd! By the Univerfi- *he was going*
ty, robb'd! —— my Sword: *to draw.*

[*Misses his Sword.*]

My Purse! Nay the very Speech [*Feels in his Pockets*
for my Mistress, is gone too? I am undone! I shall not be Marry'd this Week! Alack! Alack!

Trap feels in his Pockets } I am safe; that's well: Come
Sir, you are gull'd, I see; but if the Speech be the worst of your Loss, I warrant you there is Learning enough upon my Shoulders to make a New one: Pox o' your Books! How heavy they are! —— 'tis well for you, you do not load your Memory with 'em: 'D'Zlife! Cou'd you not like the rest of the Scholars; leave your Learning behind you?

Witl. O sweet, honey *Trap*, I shall never have so fine a Speech again, there was no less than Three Acts of Parliament quoted in it.

Trap, But pray now, have you done? Shall we march on? lest your Kind Gentlemen return, and ease me of my Burthen.

Witl. Ay, *Trap*; Ay; only this by way of Caution; Be sure to send Word immediately to dear *Lucy*, Not to take any manner of notice of me, when I come to Court her Mistress: I'll be for her again, tell her, as soon as I have got Mrs. *Meanwell*, that sweet Bird of Love, into the Cage of Matrimony; till then, *Trap*, no Syllable, pray, of any Night-Adventures.

Trap, Oh, there you are out, Sir; with Submission, I think it your Interest, the thing should be known.

Witl. Fie, *Trap*, Fie; 'twould spoil my Marriage.

Trap, 'D'Zlife! quite contrary: Believe me, Sir, a Lover is valued by his Mistress, as a Soldier by his General, the better for his Experience.

Witl. But for all your fooling, *Trap*, if Sir, *Timothy* should examine you about my Intrigues, don't you be such a Buzzard, as to own, it was upon some ill Design: Tell him only, That having often heard, that the meeting of two Maiden-heads, commonly begets a Fool; I thought it prudence in me, to take care, the Son and Heir of my Family should not be so unlike my self.

Trap, Oh! If so, then by all means your future Spouse should use the same Caution; for then your Children would be wonderful Wise:——But come, Lead on, pray.

Witl. Oh, my Speech! 'twas a rare one:——

[Going off.]

Oh, my Sword! 'twas a pure Blade.

[Exeunt.]

Scene

Scene Changes to Sir *Maurice's House*.*Enter Clerimont and Catchat.*

Cler. This *Mrs. Catchat* has a great Influence over the Lady *Meanwell*, her Sister; and if I can make her our Friend, she'll be a good Advocate for us: I'll try——— [*Aside.*

suffer, Madam, a passionate Lover to make use of this Opportunity, to discover to you the sincere———

[*Addresses himself to Catchat.*

Catch. Hold, Sir, Hold; Not so fast, pray: Don't explain your self too freely yet; there are Rules of Decency to be observ'd in every thing.

Cler. That's true, Madam: But my Passion is grown to such a heighth, that———

Catch. I know well enough, Sir, that you love me, sigh, and dye for me; yet let me tell you, 'tis both prudent, and discreet, I should pretend Ignorance, at least for a time.

Cler. Oh, Madam, give me leave but to open my Heart to you, and you'll be satisfied, that my———

Catch. Believe me, *Clerimont*, an easie Conquest affords but little Glory: You'll value my Heart the better, if I make you pull and tug hard for it.

Cler. But still you mistake my Meaning, Madam; I'll explain my self better, and make you sensible, that what I wish so impatiently for, is only———

Catch. What! Would you come to a Conclusion so very quick? Fye, *Clerimont*, 'tis against the Rules. What had become of the rest of the Romance,

mance, had *Mandana* yielded presently to *Grand Cyrus* ; or, *Cellia* fled into the Arms of *Aronces* at the first Intimation of his Love ?

Cler. Let not your Heart, Madam, be so alarm'd ; you have no violence to fear from me : I can assure you, *Mariana* is the only Object of my Desires ; and I want nothing to compleat my Happiness, but Sir *Maurice's* Consent, with the Favour of your Assistance towards it.

Catch. Oh Sir, this Shift I must hug you for ; -- 'tis the prettiest that ever came into a witty Man's Head. I admire your Invention ; and vow in all the Romances I ever read, I hardly met with any thing more ingenious, or better contriv'd.

Cler. This is Matter of Fact, Madam, and not of Wit : 'Tis *Mariana* I love, 'tis *Mariana* has the sole Empire of my Heart, and to obtain her is my highest Ambition.

Catch. Ah, good Sir, Heroe, I understand, well enough, what it is you mean, under the disguised Name of *Mariana*. Poor Creature ! She is but a Pretence I see ; and indeed, as the case stands, 'tis well for you, *Clerimont*, you are not in Earnest with her ; for to my knowledge, she is a Man-hater.

Cler. Ah, Madam ! Why must you so deceive your self, as not to believe what is Truth, and fancy Things that are not ?

Catch. No more Grimaces, as you love me ; pull off the Vizard, *Clerimont*, and be not ashamed to own a Passion which your Looks cannot conceal.

Cler. Madam, I protest——

Catch. Nay protest what you will, you shall sigh a little longer : 'Tis not for the Credit, and Reputation

Reputation of my Charms, to take pity of a Man
so soon ;—— [*Looking with a languishing Air
upon him.*]

tho' I confess, were I to break a Rule, there is so
much Honesty in that Physiognomy of yours that
I could almost be tempted to——

Cler. Keep to your Rules, Madam, I intreat you;
but do not go on in your Errour.

Catch. Adieu *Clerimont*, let this suffice for once ;
I have, I fear, discover'd too much Weakness al-
ready : 'Tis time for my Modesty to make an
honourable Retreat.

Cler. What go undeceived ! and still running
on in that Extravagant Humour,—— Madam, I
tell you——

Catch. Pray forbear, Sir, and be not so pressing :
Surely you don't design to offer Violence to my
Honour.

Cler. May I perish, Madam, if I have such a
Thought.

Catch. I'll hear no more, positively——

Cler. Hang me, Madam, if I love you, your——

Catch. I tell you, Sir, 'tis in vain,——positively--
[*Exit*

Clerimont Solus.

Pox of her Fancies : I never met with any thing
so Impertinent in my Life. When a vain Woman is
in Love, she must, for her own Credit, perswade her
self she is Belov'd.

*For speaking Truth in Love, we're not Believ'd,
All Women like in This, to be Deceiv'd.*

A C T

A C T II.

Enter Sir *Maurice*, and *Meanwell*.

Sir Maur. I Am over-joy'd at the News, Brother; for his Father, and I, were intimate Friends, and Fellow Soldiers under *Monk* at the Restauration. You may assure *Clerimont*, that I shall be proud of the Honour of his Alliance--- But here comes my [Enter *Catchat*. Sifter; Let's hear what she says to it.

You come in very good Time, Sifter, to give your Opinion about a Match for my Daughter. *Clerimont* is the Man my Brother proposes: And I am so far satisfied with his Character, that I give my Consent to it.

Catch. My Brother *Meanwell* cannot be in earnest sure. I know the Thing is impossible.

Mean. How now, Sifter, What do you mean by that?

Catch. Nothing, Brother, but only you are imposed upon, prettily imposed upon; that's all. The Gentleman's Heart, to my Knowledge, is deeply engaged somewhere else.

Mean. You are in a merry Humour, Sifter: What's the meaning of this Fooling? Pray, is not *Clerimont* in Love with my Niece?

Catch. I have Reason to think he is not.

Mean. D'Zlife! I have it from his own Mouth, Sifter.

Catch. [Laughing] Ha, ha, ha, poor Brother How I pity your Ignorance.

Mean. What-a-Pox! Did not he just now desire me to propose the Match to Sir *Maurice*? you doat surely.

Catch.

Catch. 3 Ha, ha, ha, This Plot won't take, Bro-
Laughing 5 ther, you must think again.

Sir Maur. The Woman is mad with her Laugh-
ing. Where is the Jest of it, pray?

Catch. No Jest at all, but very good Earnest I
assure you. Will you have it? here it is. *Clerimont's*
Love is a Mystery, reveal'd, as yet, to none but
me: But I'll be so kind, perhaps, as to open your
Eyes, that you may see your Errour.

Mean. Ay do: Since you pretend to know
Things so well, let's hear a little, where it is his
Affections are so deeply engaged?

Catch. But tell me first, have you a Curiosity to
know it?

Sir Maur. Surely, I think it does concern us all
to be better inform'd about it.

Catch. Shall I name the very Person?

Mean. Ay ay, by all means; I'm impatient.

Catch. Well, since you desire it 5 *Fanning her self,*
so earnestly, know Brothers 'tis 2 *and looking big.*
my self.

Sir Maur. What you! That's a very good Jest
in troth. Sister, Sister, Do you know no Body in
Town to put this upon, but 5 *Sir Maurice, and Mean-*
your own Brothers? Ha! 2 *well, fall a Laughing.*
ha! ha!

Catch. Bless me Sirs! What means all this Won-
der? You laugh, and stare, just as if I had some-
thing extraordinary. What do you see in me pray,
that's so very despicable? I am, thank God, so
made, as not to need to complain of Nature.

Sir Maur. I vow, Brother, we have been under
a sad Mistake all this while; we never knew be-
fore, we had a Beauty in our Family.

D

Catch.

Catch. I know, poor Souls, if you don't, who it is can yet kill with a Frown, and Fetter with a Smile.

Mean. I am sorry, Sister, the World is blind.

Catch. All the World is not Brother, — *Freeman, Belleair, Courtall, Valentine, Beaupard, Dorimant, Bellamour,* stand, I think, in spite of Envy, as so many living Trophies to my conquering Charms.

Sir Maur. Ha! ha! ha! all these love you, Sister, don't they?

Catch. Love me! yes, I think they do; — and besides these, a great many more, tho' I say it. I could once have muster'd a whole Regiment of 'em; for besides those, my Scorns have dispatch'd, the Wars have robb'd me of some, and the rest I have discarded.

Mean. But pray once in your Life deal Ingeniously with us. Did ever any of these Gentlemen tell you, they were really in Love with you?

Catch. None ever durst take so much Freedom with me.

Sir Maur. *Freeman*, I hear, gives the worst Character of you, and ridicules you in all Companies.

Catch. That's only to disguise his Passion, and deceive the World the better.

Mean. But what's the Reason we never see *Courtall* here?

Catch. 'Tis to shew the greatest Respect.

Sir Maur. *Valentine*, of late, makes violent Love to *Florimel*.

Catch. The Gentleman was forward, and that's the Penance I impose on him for a Month.

Mean. But what if you should fall to it in earnest, and bid adieu to your conquering Charms?

Catch.

Catch. I don't fear him, Brother ; he values Beauty too much, to forsake me.

Sir Maur. *Bellamour*, to my knowledge, is marry'd to *Philinda*.

Catch. 'Twas Despair drove him to it.

Mean. *Beaugard*, I hear, keeps a Miss at *Greenwich*.

Catch. I allow him to acquaint himself with Vice, that he may value my Vertue the more.

Sir Maur. As for *Dorimant*, there is but little Hopes of him : He was always a desperate Woman-Hater.

Catch. He was so, Brother, before he saw me : He is not the first Convert my Looks have made.

Mean. And as for *Belleair*, you know well enough, Sister, that he professes himself an inveterate Enemy to stale Virginities.

Catch. The more Hopes for me then.

Sir Maur. O' my Conscience, Sister, these are all Visions.

Mean. Nothing but Chimeras of her own.

Catch. Ay, Chimeras ! Visions ! Visions and Chimeras ! nothing but Chimeras ! Very well ; I am glad of the Chimeras ; I did not know before, I had Visions and Chimeras.

[Exit Catchat.

Sir Maur. O' my Conscience, Womens Heads, now a-days, are so stuff'd up with the Trash of Romances and Poetry, that there is no room left in 'em for Reason, or Common Sense : Our Sister is Mad ; stark Mad, Brother.

Mean. She has got the Trick of Old Maids, poor Creature ; she builds Imaginary Trophies of Love upon the Ruins of her Beauty ; and sets as good a Face as she can upon her Sorrows, whilst inwardly she is a continual Prey to uneasie Thoughts, and

Consuming Desires ; to gnawing Despair, and tearing Remorse : I pity her with all my heart. — But to return ; I have engag'd to give *Clerimont* an Answer : Shall he have *Mariana*, or shall he not ?

Sir Maur. Why do you ask again, Brother ? I have consented to it already.

Mean. Then let's in, and joyn your Lady's Consent to yours.

Sir Maur. What need of that, pray ? Have I not pass'd my Word to you ?

Mean. That's true, Brother ; but still 'twou'd not be amiss, I think, before I deliver my Message, I were sure of her Approbation too ; for you know, she is so —

Sir Maur. 'Tis needless, I tell you ; I'll answer for my Wife, and take the thing upon my self : Go you, and acquaint *Clerimont*, that he has my free Consent, while I discourse with *Mariana*, who comes out seasonably for that purpose.

Exit Meanwell.

Enter Mariana and Lucy to Sir Maurice.

Sir Maur. Come hither, Child, I have pretty News to tell you : Do you know one *Clerimont* ?

Mar. I have heard of him, Sir.

Sir Maur. What Character has he ?

Mar. The World allows him to be a Man of Wit and Honour.

Sir Maur. I am glad your Account agrees with mine, for I have some Thoughts of making him my Son-in-Law.

Mar. Oh, ravishing News ! Pardon me, dear Sir, if I have done ill, in concealing from you till now, that this same *Clerimont* you named, has already

ready shewn some Inclination for me ; the return of which, I am glad to find. is by your Consent approved of.

Sir *Maur.* You mistake me, Child ; 'tis for your Sister *Lovewit*, and not for you, I have given my Word.

Mar. Oh, Heavens ! what is't I hear ? [*She starts.*]

Sir *Maur.* Is there any thing in this, seems so surprizing to you, Child ?

Mar. Is it possible *Clerimont* should be so Unfaithful ? [*Aside.*]

Sir *Maur.* What means this great Concern ?

Mar. Support me, *Lucy* ; I shall Faint.

Sir *Maur.* Come, Child, be not so concern'd ; this was only to try you, and see if your Love to *Clerimont* is as great as the Esteem I have for him : He has my Consent to make his Addresses to you ; use him as a Lover.

Mar. I receive the Blessing on my Knees ; and thank Heav'n, my Duty and Love are reconciled. [*She Kneels.*]

Sir *Maur.* I understand my Wife designs you for young Mr. *Witlefs* ; but he'll come too late I assure him : however, I must receive him civilly, and amuse him for a while, the better to secure our Project.

Mar. Her Ladyship, I'm afraid, will make use of all her Power and Rhetorick to oppose my Wilhes.

Sir *Maur.* I'd fain see that.

Lucy. Ay, Well said, Sir : Don't let her great Words frighten you ?

Sir *Maur.* A pretty thing, indeed ! a Husband should mind what a Wife says.

Enter

Enter Lovewit, — [who speaks aside :

Sir *Timothy Witlefs*, and his lubberly Son, are just come in, and I made haste before 'em to observe how my Rival receives the first Compliments of her new Lover.

Enter Sir Timothy Witlefs, and Witlefs.

Sir *Tim.* Sir *Maurice*, this is my Son *Tim.* of whom Fame has told you so much already.

Sir *Maur.* Mr. *Witlefs*, your Servant; I can hardly Express how glad I am to see you.

Sir *Tim.* Now *Tim.* for your Compliments.

Witl. Is it not expedient, Sir, I should begin with the Father?

Sir *Tim.* Ay, Ay; by all means.

[*Witlefs speaking like a School-Boy, and acting with his Hands, addresses himself to Sir Maurice.*]

Witl. Sir, I come to salute, acknowledge, cherish and reverence in you a second Father; but a second Father to whom I am more Indebted than to my first; the first Begot me, but you Chuse me; I was his by Necessity, but you accept me by Favour: what I received from him, was but the mere Operation of the Body; but what I have from you, is the free Emanation of the Will; but by how much more the Noble Faculties of the Mind exceeds the common Endowments of the Body, by so much more also do I value that honourable Alliance, for which I am now come to pay you my profound and respectful Homage.

Lucy, Nothing like a College Madam for Wit.
[*To Mariana.*]

Witl. Have I perform'd well, Sir? [*To Sir Timothy.*]

Sir *Tim.* To a Miracle, *Tim.* — Now for the Ladies.

Witl.

Witl. Must I Kifs them?

Sir Tim. Ay, Ay, Boy they expect it.

[*Witlefs goes up to Lovewit, whom he mistakes for the Mother, salutes her, and then speaks to her :*

Madam, your Right of Maternity——

Sir Tim. Odds bodikins, *Tim.* you are out; — that is not the Mother.

Witl. Where is she then? — 'Tis none of my fault, sure?

Sir Maur. My Wife will be here presently, *Mr. Witlefs.*

Witl. Shall I stay, Father, till she comes to receive my Speech?

Sir Tim. You may in the mean time harangue your Mistress.

Lovew. There stands a Lady, Sir, waits impatiently for your Compliment.

[*Speaks scornfully*

[*Witlefs puts his Speech into his Hat, and sometimes looks on Mariana, sometimes on the Speech, and says,*

Madam, As the Statue of Memnon gave an harmonious Sound, when the Rays of the Sun reflected on it; in a like manner do I find my self animated with a ravishing Transport, at the glorious Appearance of the Sun-shine of your Beauty:—— Give me leave then, Madam, to lay at the Altar of your Charms, the Offering of that Heart, ambitious only of the Honour of being, Madam, your most loving and devoted Servant and Husband, *Timothy Witlefs of Clare-Hall.*

Lucy, Hey-day! Who would grudge Studying hard, to say such fine things.

[*Aside.*

Sir Maur. Well, *Mr. Witlefs,* what do you think of my Daughter? Is she not a pretty Book for you toturn over.

Witl:

Witl. The Lady is a Beauty in Folio.

Enter Lady Meanwell.

Sir Maur. Dear, this is Mr. *Witlefs* I present to you.

Witlefs to the Lady *M* [Madam your Right of Maternity. ———]

Lady *M.* Sir, I am glad my auspicious Stars, have by their benign Influence, directed my Steps to this place ——— that it might ———

Witl. Madam your Right of Maternity, ——— your Right of Maternity ——— because of her Portion, ——— Pretty Sons and Daughters, I like her very well. ——— Humph, ——— Madam, you have interrupted me in the middle of my Period, and that has confounded my Memory.

Lady *M.* Tis very well, Sir. Daughter, this is the individual Gen- [Presents *Witlefs* to Mar-
tlemen, Fate has decreed, and I pronounce, your Husband.

Sir Maur. What! dear Duck! before *Sir Timothy*, and I have examined into Matters?

Lady *M.* Duck! fo! ! what a Rustick and mean Expression is there?

Sir Maur. Well, then my walking University, my puzzling Library of Flesh, give me leave to tell you, things of this Nature deserves some consideration.

Lady *M.* That's good indeed with People that need second Thoughts: But where quick Imagination, and profound Judgment meet, the first do as well. I have resolv'd it shall be so; no more words pray: I expect your compliance.

Sir Maur. But Why must we precipitate things in this manner? Why not give 'em time to know

one

one another ? Are you sure their Inclinations will agree ?

Lady *M.* Marriage may breed Love; they must try.

Sir *Maur.* On my Word, Lady, if Marriage has that Effect with them, they'll have better Luck than I.

Witl. to *Mar.* For my part, Madam, I'm earddy.

Sir *Tim.* Spoke like a Man, *Tim.* [*Sir Maur.*
claps him on the Shoulder.]

Mar. And for my part, Sir, I am not : I must freely own to you, that your Merit has not yet made an Impression deep enough in me.

Witl. There is such a Sympathy of Features in our Two Faces, that my Heart tells me, we were made for one another.

Mar. Marriage is so lasting a Bondage, that surely it should be beneath the Character of a Man of Honour, to wish under it any Person he Loves.

Witl. *Nego Consequentiam*, Madam, I may be a Man of Honour, and yet consent to receive you at the Hands of your Parents.

Mar. A Woman's Heart proves commonly a Rebel, which was taken from her by Violence.

Sir *Tim.*] *Tim Tim.* fair Means are best.

Witl. We read in the Ancients, Madam, that there was a laudable Custom amongst them to ravish Daughters out of their Father's Houses, to the end it should not appear, that they had, of their own accord, fled into the Arms of a Man.

Mar. The Ancients, Sir, are Dead, and we Live ; we can save our Modesty without their Customs : And when a Match is offer'd, we know how to express our liking to it without offending against

the Rules of Decency. Give me, Sir, but a little Time: If you love me, as you pretend, you must have no other Will but mine.

Witl. Yes, Madam, to the Interest of my Love Exclusively.

Mar. But sure the greatest Instance of Love, in a Complaisant Lover, is to submit, without reserve, to the Pleasure of his Mistress.

Witl. Distinguo, Madam; where the Possession of her Person is not concern'd, *Concedo*; but where it is, *Nego*——

Mar. Well, Sir, since you want Complaisance to allow me Time to consider, I'll not want Prudence to take it my self. I am not for Marrying in such haste, nor before my Father has declared his Mind, Sir.

Lovew. } My Sister you see, Madam, had ra-
to the Lady. } ther rely upon her Fancy, than trust
to better Eyes for a Choice.

Mar. Sister, if my Father will not give me the Man I Love, I shall beg of him, at least, not to force me to Marry one I hate.

[*Exit Mariana.*

Lady M. } Your Daughter, Sir *Maurice*, grows
to Sir *Maur.* } every Day so Giddy, and so exorbi-
tantly Rude, that no polite Soul can bear with
her Effronterie: but I'll take her to Task, and teach
her a *se connoitre*.——

Enter Catchat, follow'd by Sir Maggot Jingle.

Catch. Make room, make room for the *Virgil* of our Age.

Lovew. What! my old Lover, Sir *Maggot Jingle*, I am in an Extasie for Joy.

Sir. Maur. Pox of their *Jingle*, and his scanda-
lous

lous Title : Must that starving parasitical Knight be always Rhiming and Bawling at my Table. Curse on him ! One may know by his Visits, better than by the Clock, when 'tis Dinner-time at my House.——Sir *Timothy*, I think you and I have nothing to do here, Had not we best go in, and take a Pipe in my little Room ?

Sir *Tim*. With all my Heart, Sir *Maurice*.

Sir *Maur*. The Ladies will take care of Mr. *Witlefs*.

[*Exeunt Sir Maur. and Sir Tim.*]

Lady *Maur*. Mr. *Witlefs*, let me have the Honour of presenting you to this Darling of the Muses, this younger Brother of *Apollo*, Sir *Maggot Fingle*.

Witl. What, Madam, the Famous Sir *Maggot Fingle* that writ that Incomparable Poem of the Fox ?

Lady *M*. The very same, Sir.

Witlefs. Oh Sir ! for the sake of the Fox, let me embrace you, as long as there are Men that love to hunt after Wit and Fancy ; your Fox Will be sure to be run to Posterity. [*Embraces Sir M. Fing.*]

Sir *M. Fingle*, Sir, your most Humble : I do not love to commend my self ; but I take that Piece to be a *Non ultra* in the kind.

Witlefs. What a pity 'tis, Sir, the Court does not understand your Merit.

Sir. *M. Fing*. I am now favouring the ungrateful World, with a rare Collection of my Songs ; for without Vanity, let it be spoken, I am the best Lyrick Poet in *England*.

Catch. How Wittily his Muse expresses her self.

Lady *Maur*. I'm now in my Element——*Nimble*, bring Chairs,——There lies a Booby now, for

want of understanding the *Æquilibrium* of Things. [Nimble brings a Chair, and falls with it.

Nimble. And so this, I saw it, as soon as I was down.

Sir M. Fing. 'Tis well for you, Son of an *Aff*,
Nature did not make you of *Glass*.

Lovew. What! an *impromptu* with so much Wit! Wonderful?

Catch. Surely this Man is the Phoenix of Poetry.

[Chairs are brought, all sit.

Sir M. Fing. Well Ladies, Is the Day fix'd for the opening of your Academy of *Beaux Esprits*.

Lady Maur. Tuesday is the Day, *Sir Maggot*.

Sir M. Fing. Woe then to the Royal Society; the Glory of it will suffer a manifest Eclipse.

Catch. Nay, *Sir Maggot*, we will not be so Cruel neither to those Gentlemen as to refuse to join to our Learned Body, the most able Mathematicians amongst 'em; to the end, that by a free Communication of our Discoveries, we may penetrate together into such dark Secrets of Nature, as have hitherto been deem'd unfathomable by human Capacity.

Lady Maur. Our Society shall be as the Inquisition, a Tribunal without Appeal, or Mercy? where, with a Sovereign Authority, we shall Judge of all Books that come out: No Authors shall write well but those we approve of; and no body pretend to Wit, but we and our Friends.

Lovew. But you, *Sir Maggot*, has your witty Muse conceiv'd of late: What News pray from *Apollo's* Levee?

Sir M. Fing.

Sir *M. Jing.* Very little, Madam, that deserves to be nam'd to such Sapphoes of our Age, as I see here.

Lovew. Come Sir *Maggot*, no Compliments: You know we had rather hear fine Things, than our selves commended.

Sir *M. Jing.* This is another *impromptu*, Ladies, only made at Leisure. [Pulling out a Paper.

Catch. Oh! I shall fall into a Swoon——

Sir *M. Jingle.* Hum, Hum, Hum. ——

To the Countess of *Squeezingham*,
upon her A G U E.

*Your Prudence surely, is Asleep,
Whilst you magnificently Treat;
And in your rich Apartment Keep
Your cruel Enemy in State.*

Lady *M.* Oh the *Fantèe* Beginning!

Catch. What a gallant Turn is there!

Lovew. Nothing can be more *degagée*.

Sir *M. Jing.* *Ab force it out, say what they will,
From your Apartment, rich and rare;
Th' Ungrateful that attempts to kill.
And rob you of a Life so fair.*

Lady *M.* Oh give me Leave to breathe:

Lovew. I am all Rapture, I vow.

Catch. Bless me! what a pretty Metaphor that *rich Apartment* is.

Lady *M.* The Parenthesis in my Mind, is worth a Million —— *Force it out, say what they*

they will, it implies a Challenge, a Defiance to Criticks.

Lovew. I'd freely give my Portion to be the Author of a Thing, so much out of the common Road.

Sir M. Jing. What follows, Ladies, will not disgrace the Beginning I'm sure.

*What ! thus regardless of your Race,
In your high Blood it self to place !
And Night and Day torment you so.*

*Though it has all this Favour found,
Oh, yet at length some Anger show ;
And when next to the Bath you go,
With your own Hands let it be Drown'd.*

Lady M. I can hold no longer.

Catch. I die away ! Support me ! Oh, Support me, some body ! Alas ! Alas !

Lovew. I'm lost in Pleasure !

Lady M. *Though it has all this Favour found ;* though you have indulg'd it, humour'd it so long——

Lovew. *Oh, yet at length some Anger show ;* some Passion, some Indignation, some Resentment for its Ingratitude.

Catch. *With your own Hands let it be Drown'd : ---* That is, take hold of it, Madam, and plunge it into the Water —— Oh ! Oh ! ——

Lady M. Well, Mr. *Witlefs*, did you ever hear the like ? What do ye think now the Author of so excellent a Piece deserves ?

Witl. What does he deserve, Madam ? —— He deserves to be Hang'd.

Sir

Sir *M. Fing.* What, Sir, do you know him ?

[*In a Passion.*]

Witl. Not I, Sir, by *Jupiter Ammon* ; But I warrant him a most illiterate Ass ; a mere Rhiming Ideot, without the least Tincture of Philosophy in him.

Lovem. You are too severe, Mr. *Witlefs* ; the Author is a Man noted for Wit among us.

Witl. That's all one to me ; I maintain him Guilty of High-Treason against *Aristotle* : Who in the Devil's Name, ever heard of an *Ague* being a *Tangible Body*, and subject to Drowning.

Sir *M. Fing.* I am confident, Sir, no Man can write better Verses than these ; and my Reason for it, is, because I my self am the Author of 'em.

Witl. What you, Sir ?

Sir *M. Fing.* Yes, Sir, my self in Person.

Witl. The more shame for for you, Sir. ———

Look ye Ladies, I'll make ye a Copy of Verses upon any Subject you'll name, only to let you see the Difference between a Poet and a Scholar.

Sir *M. Fing.* Then write a Madrigal upon a Box o' the Ear.

[*Gives him a Box o' the Ear.*]

Witl. Meaning me, Sir ? — [after a little musing]
And so I will ———

Sir Maggoty Jingle
Did make my Ear tingle ;
Which was to me an Affront :
But strait for his Box
I wish'd him the Pox ;
So I ad the better on't.

Sir *M. Fing.* Ha ! Ha ! Ha !

[*Laughs*]

Witl.

Witl. What? do you Laugh? you Chimney-Sweeper of *Parnassus*! Tho' I do take a Box o'the Ear, I have too much Honour to put up a Jeer: By the Scull of *Chaucer*, I'll Rhime thee Black and Blue.— Come if you dare! you Poet Laureat of *Bedlam*. [*Witlefs lays his Sword aside, and offers, to Box with Sir M. Jingle.*]

Lady M. In the Name of *Apollo*, I charge you to keep the Peace.

Witl. Thank ye my Lady, Mushroom, that you live.— And now Ladies, to convince you, that a sneaking Rhiming Knight is but an Owl to a Scholar, Here, Here's a piece of Work, for One that has been at *Cambridge* but Four Years and Three-quarters. [*Witlefs offers a roll'd Sheet of large Paper to Lady M.*]

Sir M. Jing. If you Please, Madam, I'll save your Ladyship the trouble of Reading. *Sir M. takes the Paper.*

[*Sir Maggot Jingle reads —*

An Exact and Accurate M A P, containing the most Curious and most Remarkable Signs upon the Road between Cambridge and London, with their several Mottoes, Inscriptions and Devices, as they were faithfully taken and Delineated by Timothy Witlefs, Batchelor of Arts, in his late Travels.

Sir M. Jing. By *Apollo*, the Thing is New and Singular—Ha! Ha! Ha! [*Ladies look on the Paper.*]

Witl. You may look, Ladies, and wonder: I can say that for my self, there is a Thing now, *Sir Francis Drake* never thought of in all his Travels round the World.

Louew.

Love. For my part, I am charm'd with the curious Drawing.

Will. And well you may, Lady: for to tell you the truth, I have, in all my Fancies, a huge stroke of the Ancients: — Look ye; All these fine Prospects you see here, I have copied from a famous Landskip, drawn, to the best of my Memory, five Years before the Flood.

Sir M. Fing. Pray, Sir, do you know what Country-man the Painter was. [*In a jeering Tone.*]

Will. A Foreigner, to be sure, by his way of Drawing: I think he was Painter in Ordinary to the King of *Venice*; his Name begins with an (*&c.*) but truly, I have forgot it now.

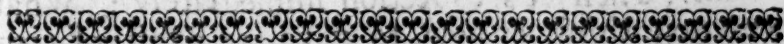
Nimble. Madam — Dinner is upon the Table.

Lady M. Mr. *Witlefs*, you'll do us the favour to go in.

Love. Sir *Maggot*, for the sake of the *Ague* be you my Guest to day,

Sir M. Fing. Agreed: —

A hearty Meal must make our Works Compleat:
For Poets live to Write, and Write to Eat.



A C T III.

Enter Lucy and Trap.

Trap. **H**IS Steward's Place, say'st thou?
Faith, no News in the World could
have been more welcome; for besides that I have
a natural Inclination to Mischief, Sir *Timothy* was
F pleas'd,

pleas'd, just now, to give me warning to be gone to morrow, only for being at my Arrival, a little too familiar with that habitual Sin of his, Mrs. *Heart-ease*, his House-keeper, and I was almost mad for an opportunity to be revenged on him.

Enter Clerimont.

Lucy. Hold, *Jack*, Hold; here comes the Gentleman; make your best Honours to your best Master.— [*Presents Trap to Cler.*

This Creature you see here, Sir, is that worthy Brother of mine, whose Skill and Zeal to do you Service, I have already commended to you.

Cler. He does not look as if he were a Man of Scruples: I dare answer by his Physiognomy, That his Conscience can dispense with a little Roguery to do a Man a Kindness: But has he the heart to serve his Master's Rival?

Trap. For a Master, Sir, give me leave to own none but you: And as to Conscience, I am as modest as the *Vicar of Bray*; and seldom listen to it, when there's Preferment in the case.

Cler. Then let's to Action immediately: What can you think of now, to give me a taste of your Wit.

Trap. For my Probation-Trick, I have a Plot in hand, will strangely confound and perplex the *Witlesses*: but I must not forestall you with an Account of my Projects; only by way of *Prologue* to our *Comedy*, if you have a mind to make your self Sport, and serve your Love at the same time, I can put you in a way.

Cler. With all my heart: — Let's hear what you propose?

Trap. Mr. *Witless* has order'd me to find out a Dancing-

Dancing-Master for him: Let me but introduce you in that Quality, and you'll have a good Opportunity to remove his Affections from your Mistress, the Man is as Easie as you can wish; put any thing upon him, I'll answer, 'twill take.

Cler. I long to be acting of that part; for I was impatient to see the Figure of the Man.

Lucy. Then go about it instantly; for behold the Enemy appears.

Cler. Adieu, pretty Mrs. *Lucy*, Remember me a thousand times to Charming *Mariana*. — You *Machiavel*, away to Consultation [To Trap.
Exeunt severally.

Enter Catchat and Witlefs.

Catch. I say, Mr. *Witlefs*, that Milk-Sop-Babe, my Niece, shall not have You; upon my Word, she shall not.

Witl. She us'd me scurvily, that's the Truth on't.

Catch. She does not deserve a Man of Wit.

Witl. No more she don't, Faith.

Catch. I am really so Chagrin, Sir, to see a pretty Gentleman abus'd in my Brother's House, that to save the Credit of his Family, I am thinking of something to make you amends for his Daughter's Rudeness.

Witl. You are exceeding Bounteous, Mrs. *Catchat*.

Catch. Look upon me, Mr. *Witlefs*, and tell me freely, Cou'd you love a Woman that has liv'd just long enough to be Wise, and make a good Choice?

Witl. 'Tis such a one I long for, I protest.

Catch. A Beautiful, Charming Creature.

Witl. Faith, you make my Mouth water.

Catch. A Wit, a Critick, an Author?

Witl. Odd'zookers: But where shall we find such a Treasure?

Catch. Such a Treasure is above the Merit and Ambition of Crown'd Heads; and yet at your Service, Mr. *Witlefs*.

Witl. Oh, you ravish me, Madam! I'm transported! Let me see that Angel! that Goddess! I must Adore her! Where is she? Where is she, pray?

Catch. Not far, Mr. *Witlefs*: — Here she stands.

Witl. Where Madam? Where? *[Turns round.]*

Catch. Turn this way, Mr. *Witlefs* and fix your Eyes upon me; — 'tis my self.

Witl. What! You, Mrs. *Catchat*! — And is that Face you have on now, all the Faces you have in the World, pray?

Catch. No doubt on't Sir; And surely, whoever has such a One, need not desire a better.

Witl. Faith, Madam, to be plain then, that Face of yours is a very unmannerly Face, to give the Lie to so fair a Description.

Catch. I cannot be angry with one who I'm sure loves me: — Besides, I must tell you, Mr. *Witlefs*, (though indeed there is little Need of any other Charm but my Person) that I am a Fortune, Sir; — I have Thousands, Thousands, Sir.

Witl. Oddzniggs, Madam, you should have mention'd that first of all.

Catch. The Mortal I shall bless with the Possession of my Personal Goods, extrinsick or intrinsick, shall have Four Thousand Pounds down, and a Thousand more, upon the Birth of my first Child.

Witl. With Submission, that's ill order'd, Mrs. *Catchat*, it should be one Thousand Pound down,
and

and four Thousand Pound at the Fall of the first Fruit? because the Temptation of the Money, is all the Provocation a Husband is like to have with you, to strive for an Heir.

Catch. } Bless me! The Fellow is a Fool, a per-
aside. } fect Stranger to Wit, and Beauty: I
must stick to my *Clerimont*; he is a Man of Judgment.

Enter Sir Maggot Jingle, Lady Meanwell, and Mrs. Lovewit.

Lovew. Come Sir *Maggot*, we will not be put off with a Compliment; we'll have the Song.

Sir M. Jing. To tell you the Truth, I am a little proud of this Piece; and look upon it as a very lucky Hit of my Muse towards Preferment--- Here it is—

S O N G.

Should King Lewis, with all his Might,
Thus say to me, by chance,
Resign thy Peggy for one Night,
And I'll make thee a Peer of France.
To the Monsieur, I'd reply,
As I love a Christmas-Pye,
Her Flesh thy Royal Paw shan't handle.
Keep thy Honour and thy Pelf,
And I'll keep Peggy to my self,
Who shines as bright as any Candle.

Lovew. Next time Sir *Maggot* favours us with a Visit, I hope our Meetings will be regularly fix'd.

Catch.

Catch. Do you know Sir *Maggot*, that I discover'd last Week, Three Men in the Moon, fighting a Duel in a Church-yard?

Sir *M. Jing.* Ay, that I know; and I hear since, that he in the Blue Coat was wounded, and drop'd down into a Tub of Yeast, at a Brewer's in *Bury*.

Catch. I saw the poor Creature fall; and I could not but admire at the other Two, who, instead of running away, and making their Escape, fell a gazing on me for an Hour together. The Sparks of that shining World, are of a Loving Constitution, I promise you; a few Looks of mine would consume 'em all; and then my Charms, like *Alexander*, must weep for want of Worlds to Conquer.

Sir *M. Jing.* I cannot boast of prodigious things, Madam: However, I have now a small Piece in the Press, which will, I hope, appear new to the World; and that's *Coke* upon *Littleton* turn'd into Heroick Verse.

Witl. Now you talk of Projects, do you know, Ladies, that my Tutor and I, are setting up a Penny-Post to the *West-Indies*

Sir *M. Jing.* But you, Mrs. *Catchat*, what's become pray of your dainty Piece of Work as you call it?

Catch. What! my Satire against *Eunuchs*; Foh; I left it unfinish'd; the filthy Subject provok'd my Spleen, but could not raise my Fancy.

Lady *M.* For my part, I love any thing that has a Relish of the publick Spirit in it. I was Yesterday with my Lord Mayor, to communicate to him a Mathematical Engine of my own, to keep the Streets as clean, and as dry as a Drawing Room all the Year round.

Witl. How's this Madam, pray?

Lady *M.* 'Tis only by securing the City from Rain.

Witl.

Witl. From Rain, Madam ! that's impossible :
How can you compass it ?

Lady M. Oh easily enough, *Mr. Witless* : Tell
me, Have you seen the glaring Lamps upon the
Road to *Kensington* ?

Witl. Yes, Madam, that I have, What then ?

Lady M. Well just so, 'tis only setting up Tim-
ber Posts round about the City, and then fixing a
pair of Bellows upon every one of 'em, to blow
the Clouds away.

Lovew. Sir *Maggot*, I have now a huge Limbeck
making ; guess for what.

Sir M. Jing. Guess say you ? ——— Faith I can't,
unless it be to dissolve the Philosophers Stone.

Lovew. No, no, Sir *Maggot* ; 'tis for a more
noble Design, I assure you : You must understand,
that I have made an exact Collection of all the
Plays that ever came out, which I design to put
into my Limbeck ; and then extract all the Quin-
tessence of Wit that is in them, to sell it by drops
to the Poets of this Age.

Sir M. Jing. Oh Madam, Let me bespeak a few
of your witty Drops for the Poor Gentlemen of the
Athenian Society.

Lovew. Surely those Oracles of Learning do not
want 'em.

Witl. Faith but they do : Look ye, I proposed
but this to them t'other Day : Suppose we should
put the Brains of a Scholar into the Head of a Bull,
whether or no that Bull would speak Latin as I do ?
and never trust me if they knew what to say to it.

Catch. But why should you think That, so migh-
ty a Miracle, I my self who seldom boast of any
thing, am now teaching a Flea to Sing : The little
Creature understands the Notes already ; and if I
live, she shall sing a Song in the next *Opera* that's
acted.

Enter

Enter Sir Timothy Witlefs, reeling ; and Sir Maurice Meanwell, a little elevated.

Sir Maur. You might have taken t'other Bottle ; Why in such haste *Sir Timothy* ?

Sir Tim. Look ye Neighbour, when I have Business of Importance in my Noddle, I love to be Sober : Where is honest *Tim* ? Come my Boy, you must be married to morrow, along, along, to my Taylor ; by the Beard of King *Dick*, I'll make thee as gay as a Pageant at my Lord Mayor's Show. Ladies your Servant ; *Sir Maurice* your most Humble. On, on Boy. [*Exit Sir Timothy.*

Witl. I go, Ladies, and remain your most obsequious Slave. My future Progenitor in Law, I rest for ever your dutiful Son, that is to be.

[*taking his leave.*

[*Exit Witlefs.*

Sir M. Fing. I must take my leave too, Ladies ; for some *Vertuosi* are to wait on me this Afternoon, about a Scheme I am preparing for the Parliament, to have all the Cities, Towns, and Villages of *England*, turn'd into Sea-Ports.

Lady M. Then *Sir Maggot* your Servant ; but pray remember your Promise, and fail not at the New Play to morrow ; for the Author came Yesterday to pay his *Devoirs* to us, and we have engag'd for ourselves, and our Friends, to find it a good one, in spite of Rules, and Criticks.

Sir M. Fing. But tell me first, Madam, is the Poet a modest, civil Poet ; or is he like one of those, that cannot be Witty without being Obscene.

Lady M. What makes you ask *Sir Maggot* ?

Sir

Sir M. Fing. 'Tis only for the pleasure of observing some nice Ladies of my Acquaintance, who will be sure never to miss the first Night of a Play, that if there be any thing high season'd in it, they may please their Palates, and tickle their Fancies with it; and then with a turning up of the Nose, and a Jesu! had I known the Play was so filthy, I would not have seen it for a Million: They'll be sure, for their own Reputation, to cry, the Poet down; and declaim high against those who shew so little Modesty, as to see it the Second Day.

Lady M. I know the Author, *Sir Maggot*, and dare engage for the Chastity of his Muse.

Sir M. Fing. 'Tis enough, Ladies, that the Poet is under your Protection; I'll be at his Play I warrant ye, and clap stoutly as soon as the Candles are Lighting. Exit.

Sir Maur. I thought, *Wit Paramount*, I must have been forced to dismish my self without Audience.

Lady M. What! Angry? *Sir Maurice*; I thought you stood all the while admiring the Famous *Sir Maggot Fingle*,

Sir Maur. Hang him for a scurvy Pimp of Wit, that could never Match Rhime, and Sense together, a Scoundrel of *Parnassus*, and the very scandal of his Trade.

Lovew. His Trade! Foh, 'how Citizen-like is that Expression!

Sir Maur. A dull Gossiping, Rhiming Parasite, who Robs the Pastry-Cooks of Paper to Write his Madrigals upon, and stands Recorded in Ale-Houses, for the inspiring Liquor that makes him a Wit.

Catch. Brother, Brother talk with more Reverence of *Sir Maggot Fingle*, pray, what if his
G
Loyalty

Loyalty to *Oliver* has made him Poor, he is still a Knight, and a Poet, and such as he, you know, can Fight, and Lampoon.

Sir Maur. Faith, Sister, I fear neither his Sword nor his Satire, as long as I keep a good Table; for such as he I know, had rather put up an Affront than lose a Meal.

Lady M. How now, *Sir Maurice*, is the Merry God Dancing a Jig within the inclosure of your Brains? you forget your self strangely methinks.

Sir Maur. 'Tis to you, Sister, I speak, what a Devil have you to do with Jingling and Poetry.

[*To Catchat.*

Catch. Lord, Sister, what a strange Compound your Husband is of Vulgar and Clownish Attoms?

Sir Maur. A pretty thing indeed, to see those long Spectacles of yours, set on the Top of my House, for you to peep, and tell how many Hackney Coaches are going to the Moon.

Lovew. Oh the illiterate Brute! thus to affront a Telescope.

[*aside.*

Sir Maur. I am no Scholar, not I, and I thank my Stars for it, but with your Leave, so much has common Sense taught me, that all the Study and Philosophy of a Wife, should be to please her Husband, instruct her Children, have a vigilant Eye over Domestick Affairs, keep a good Order in her Family, and stand as a living Pattern of Virtue and Discretion to all about her.

Lady M. *Sir Maurice* like another *Solon*, is now setting up for a Law-giver, Poor Soul!

Sir Maur. The Women of Old did not Read so much, but Liv'd better, Housewifry was all the Knowledge they aspired to; but now a-days Wives must Write forsooth, and pretend to Wit with a Pox.

Catch.

Catch. 'Tis the partial, and foolish Opinion of Men Brother, and not our Fault has made it ridiculous now a-days ; for a Woman to pretend to Wit, she was born to it, and can shew it well enough, when Occasion serves.

Sir Maur. Ay, to our Cost sometimes, Female Wit Triumphs, and Excels in three Things, Revenge, Dissembling and Cuckoldom ; there I grant we must yield to you for Quickness and Dexterity.

Catch. But for all your Jestings, Brother, a Man's Wit is as dull as his Appetite, if not set an Edge by Ours.

Sir Maur. Hang your Edging, a Woman's Wit was always a Pimp to her Pleasures.

Lady M. I'm tired Sir *Maurice* with your Non-sense : Satire does not become a Citizen.

Sir Maur. But I tell you, Lady, that I will have a Reformation in my House, that this Plague of Wit has infected all my Servants, even my little Boy, forsooth, cannot turn the Spit now without a *Pharamond*, or a *Cassandra* in his Hand ; If I call for Drink, the Butler brings me a *Spenser*, or a *Ben Johnson*.

Lady M. If this be all you have to say, Sir *Maurice*. Farewel.

Sir Maur. No, Angry Mother of the Muses, give me but Attention, and you shall hear ; your Daughter's Wit, it seems, is like to starve her Love : I'm told she designs to keep Hospitality in another World, and feast the Worms with her Maiden-Head.

Lady M. What strange *Jargon's* this ?

Sir Maur. But *Mariana* being not altogether so witty, but like a simple Creature, desirous to keep House in this World ; 'tis Time to think of a Husband for her.

Lady M. 'Tis what my preventing Wisdom has already determin'd ; I have engag'd to Sir *Timothy*, that his Son shall be the Man ; he is a Person of deep Parts, and that's in my Opinion the only Way to infuse the Spirit of Improvement into your Daughter ?

Sir Maur. Did you not perceive by my Daughter's Discourse with Mr. *Witlefs*, that she has no great liking to him ; why should we force her Inclination, my Dear.

Lady M. What now ? will you offer to contradict me ; I have past my Word, and it must be so.

Sir Maur. I am not so much against it my dearest Dear, but only let us do things as they should be done, let's give her a little Time at least, to conquer her Aversion.

Lady M. 'Tis Pity indeed, but my Determinations should wait for the settling of the giddy Thought of such an illiterate Creature as your Daughter ; I am resolv'd it shall be as I please, bid her be ready, for to Morrow I'll send to Mr. *Engross* to bring the Writings this Evening to Seal.

Sir Maur. But my Dear, in a Case of this Importance.

Lady M. What, again, ? Hold your Tongue, Sir *Maurice*, I don't love People should reply.

[*Exeunt all but Sir Maurice.*]

Enter Meanwell to Sir Maurice, who stands hanging his Head in a Melancholy Posture.

Mean. I see your Lady going, Brother, I suppose you have had some Discourse about the Business.

Sir Maur. Yes, Brother.

Mean.

Mean. Well and what's the Result of it pray, shall we have *Mariana*? Has she given her consent; is the thing agreed on?

Sir Maur. Not altogether.

Mean. Does she deny?

Sir Maur. No.

Mean. Is the matter left in suspense?

Sir Maur. Not at all.

Mean. What then Brother, is it a Myſtery never to be Revealed?

Sir Maur. I'll tell you Brother, ſhe ſays that ſhe has engag'd her Word for Mr. *Witleſs*, and cannot recall it.

Mean. And what did you ſay to it pray, did you accept of him?

Sir Maur. I! No; God forbid.

Mean. What Answer then did you make?

Sir Maur. None at all, and I am glad I did not, for fear ſhe ſhould have diſputed me into a conſent.

Mean. The Reaſon is Admirable Brother; but did you at leaſt propoſe *Clerimont* to her?

Sir Maur. No Brother, I had more Wit I aſſure you; look you, when I heard her Name Mr. *Witleſs*, I thought my mentioning *Clerimont* would but Ex-aſperate her the more.

Mean. Your Prudence Brother amazes me, an't you aſhamed of your ſoft, and eaſie Temper?

Sir Maur. Brother I love Peace, and my Wife is a terrible Dragon when once out of Humour; ſhe makes indeed a High Boaſt of her Philoſophy, but ſhe is not a bit the leſs Cholerick for it, and her Morals that teach her to look upon all things with an indifferent Eye, have not the leaſt Influence upon her Paſſions; ſhe is ſtill Woman all over, Brother.

Mean.

Mean. This is Mockery, perfect Mockery Brother, your Wife Rules because you're faint hearted; take my Word, 'tis the way, of Cunning, and designing Wives as soon as they are Married, Nicely to study the Temper of their Husbands, and thence Usurp Power in proportion to their Weakness.

Sir Maur. In sober sadness I'm to blame; my Neighbours take Notice of it I hear, and I begin to be weary on't. Faith I do Brother.

Mean. For shame, good Brother do not make your self such a Ninny, as to suffer that puny thing Woman to lead you by the Nose; pluck up a Spirit, shew your self a Man; and when your Wife has the ill Manners to Argue with you, tell her in a Tone of Authority, such is my Will and Pleasure.

Sir Maur. You are in the right Brother, [*Cocking come I'm resolv'd I'll shew more Courage his Hat*] for the future.

Mean. Well said.

Sir Maur. 'Tis a disgrace for a Man to submit to the Capricious Humour of his Wife.

Mean. Very well.

Sir Maur. She has abused my Patience too long.

Mean. Very true.

Sir Maur. Too much imposed upon me.

Mean. That's certain.

Sir Maur. And she shall know to Day, that my Daughter is my Daughter, and that it belongs to me, and to no body else, to dispose of her as I please.

Mean. Now 'tis as it should be, I am overjoy'd at the Change.

Sir Maur. You Know *Clerimont's* Lodgings, pray call upon him, and tell him, I must speak with him instantly.

Mean.

Mean. I am going to the *Exchrnge*, to hear what News from *Hamburgh*, for I had notice this Morning that our Ship is safely arrived, and I'll see him as I go. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE Changes to Sir Timothy's Lodgings.

Enter Clerimont, Trap.

Trap. **H**ere he comes, compose your self a little, and forbear Laughing if you can——Sir, here's Mr. *Le Caper*, [*Enter Witlefs*] the best Dancing-master in the Town, is come to wait on you.

Witl. Sir, your very profound, humble Servant.

Cler. Your Man informs me, Sir, that you have a desire to learn the graceful Motions of our Art, I shall be proud of——

Witl. But first tell me, Sir, could I learn to Dance by Grammar? I love to do things methodically.

Cler. That can't be, Sir; for the Perfection, or End of our Art is chiefly to reform the rude, and clownish Gestures of the Body, which is a thing meerly Practical.

Witl. Whether you know it or no, I can tell you, Sir, your Art is very ancient, I have read somewhere in *Juvenal*, that there was a Ball in *Noah's* Ark.

Cler. Oh, Sir, that's but a Trifle, we derive the Pedigree of Dancing much higher.

Witl. But now let's see what we have to do, I am soon to marry, and I have sent for You, Mr. *Le Caper*, to teach me to Dance as curiously as you can, for 'twould be a shame for a Gentleman, and a Scholar as I am, that any Body should outdome at my own Wedding.

Cler.

Cler. Don't you question, Sir, but I shall come off with Credit; but pray when is the Day?

Witl. To Night, I hope.

Cler. What! so soon, Sir! you confound me.

Trap. Don't let that fright you, Mr. *Le Caper*, my Master is not like other People, his Brains circulate to his very Heels; I'll engage for him, that he'll learn as much in Two Hours, as he would do in a Quarter of a Year!

Cler. Oh, if so we are well enough——Come, Sir, your Hat —— So: —— Your Shoulders —— very well: —— Your Arms —— To a Miracle: —— Hold up your Head —— So: —— Your Right Foot forward —— So: —— Turn out your Toes —— So: —— Keep your Body strait —— Admirable: —— Make your Honours —— Nothing can be more exact.

[Teaching Witlefs, who performs awkwardly.]

Witl. Well, what do you think on't, Master? I fancy I do pretty well.

Cler. You amaze me, Sir, with your Dexterity.

Witl. Don't you think my Mistress will be Transported to see me Dance so well? You must be at the Wedding, Master, remember I invite you.

Trap. He'll be there I don't question, and one of the chief Actors, I Hope.

[Aside.]

Cler. You honour me, Sir; but will you pardon my Curiosity, if I presume to ask the Lady's Name who is to be so happy?

Witl. My Mistress, and future Spouse, Sir, is one Mrs. *Meanwell*.

Cler. Which of 'em —— *Mariana*?

Witl. The very same.

Cler. If so, then I must needs say, some People have better Luck than they deserve.

Witl. What can be the meaning of this?

Cler.

Cler. Nothing, nothing, Sir, I have been too rash I see.

Witl. Surely there is something of Mystery in this ; pray, good Mr. *Le Caper*, inform me.

Cler. No, Sir, Men of my Profession ought to be secret.

Witl. 'Dzlife, I can bear no longer ! pray, good Master, do not keep me thus in suspense ; I swear by the University, your Kindness to me shall do you no Disservice.

Cler. Upon your Word, Sir ?

Witl. Upon my Word and Honour.

Cler. Look ye, Sir, Sir *Maurice* is my Friend, Mrs. *Meanwell* too is one I value ; but surely when a Person of your Character is going to be grossly cheated, even by those he least suspects, I cannot, I must not be silent, I'll deal frankly with you, Sir, Do you in the Business as you think fit.

Witl. Oh sweet Mr. *Le Caper*, how good you are !

Cler. The young Lady, Sir, to my Knowledge has an intimate Engagement with a certain Spark, that would make nothing of cutting your Throat, should he, by chance, discover, that you are resolved to go on in your Amour ; she loves him so passionately too, that I heard her once vow to him, she'll have none but him for a Husband.

Witl. Say you so ? The poor Fool ! how I pity her ! I have done with her, I warrant her : What, did the silly Creature fancy a Man of my Exploits and Fame can want Women ? Bless me ! the World to me is like the Seraglio of the Grand Seignior.

Cler. Besides, I must tell you by the bye, that her Humour is too *French*, and Airy, for a Man of

H

your

your solid Parts ; who knows, but that it may in Time degenerate into Coquetry.

Witl. A Word to the Wise, I understand you, Master ; the Spark shan't cut my Throat I warrant him, nor the Gipsy make a Cuckold of me, I promise her ; a Coquet, 'Dzniggers ! Let who will take her, the cheating Devil made this Morning as if she had been a very reserv'd Saint.

Cler. Woman, Sir, is a Riddle, a meer Compound of Contradictions, whose Meaning you'll never find out, but by mistaking her Words.

Trap. Bless me, Sir, there was a narrow Escape for us now, thank your Stars and Mr. *Le Caper* for it.

Witl. Oh the subtle Crocodile ! how I hate her ! Nay, she is Illiterate too, and understands neither Greek nor Latin.

Cler. Nay, I fancy she despises Dancing too, for I have often observ'd her making Faces at her Sister when I was teaching her.

Witl. Then you go to Sir *Maurice's* sometimes, Master ?

Cler. Ay, that I do three Times a Week.

Witl. Oh ! what would I give you were there within this Hour ! for I'm resolved to go, and give a parting Lecture to that false, cunning, jilting, profligate Minx.

Cler. I'll endeavour to be there ; but pray not a Word from whence you had it, you'd ruin me.

Witl. Upon the Word of a Batchelor of Arts, not a Tittle ; be there only, and I'll make you Sport I warrant you for this Kindness, I'll so rattle the little Jade before you —

Trap. On my Conscience this is a wicked World ; there is no Faith in a Woman, who Cheats even with her Modesty.

Witl.

Witl. [Going.] Mr. *Le Caper*, remember within an Hour ——— Oh the Devil!

Trap. [Following.] Oh the Woman!

[Exeunt *Witless* and *Trap*.]

Cler. [Solus.]

Fortune, her Blindness, does too plainly show,
When on an *Ass* she would her Gifts bestow.

For though she still desires, not to forsake him,
A Fool's but what a *Man of Sense* will make him.



A C T IV.

S C E N E *Sir Maurice's House.*

Enter Lovewit and Catchat.

Lovew. **P**Ray, good Aunt, what makes you so very earnest to know, if That *Clerimont* be quite out of my Mind?

Catch. Kindness to you Child, nothing else; I know he is otherwise Engaged and I would not have you love in vain.

Lovew. But still what makes you fancy it so very difficult a Thing for me to hate that Man? Have my Words or Looks at any Time betray'd such a mighty Passion for him?

Catch. He boasted of it once; how far he had Reason to do it, you know best.

Lovew. Presumptuous! And could you that know me, Aunt, believe I should make Choice of one, who counts it a Scandal to our Sex to pretend to Wit?

H 2

Catch.

Catch. No, dear Niece, I could hardly imagine you'd think that Man worthy of your Esteem, who takes all Occasions to ridicule the excellent Talents the World admires in you.

Lovew. Unmannerly! he spares no Body; I hear even your self, Aunt, don't escape his Satire.

Catch. Stupid! Whatever Approbation your Poetry meets with among the Wits, he is always the last to commend it.

Lovew. Ignorant! I have twenty Times read Things of your composing to him, which he could not forbear calling Stuff and Nonsense to my Face.

Catch. Impertinent! I have had a thousand Quarrels with him upon your Account.

Lovew. All this, and more perhaps, I could have dispens'd with, but one Thing my Philosophy could not forgive him, that he had hardly loved me Two Years before he began to talk of Marriage—Foh!

Catch. Oh the filthy Beast! Foh! it turns my Stomach I protest.

Lovew. Lord! What a bold and impudent Creature is Man, to dare mention the Word *Marriage* to a Woman of Wit and Fortune? For 'tis no more than with fawning Words, and passionate Speeches, to desire her very civilly to mend his Condition, and make her self his Slave.

Catch. Faith, Niece, 'tis even so.

*For the soft Joys of Love no longer last,
When once the fatal Yea our Lips has past;
Then we begin to Court, and to Comply,
And find we only Rule, while we Deny.*

Lovew. Out upon those Treacherous Syrens, cruel and bewitching Monsters, who charm us
into

into Ruine, and greedily devour our Substance.

Catch. But what say you to this, Niece ? I know Men in Town, who were born with the best Dispositions in the World to make good Husbands, who yet as soon as they came to be married, lest they should be laugh'd at for their Singularity, affected a Peevishness, which was not natural to them ; and rather than their Wives should have the Pleasure or Benefit of their good Humour, force themselves into a sullen Temper ; they are true Friends and merry Companions abroad, but very ill Husbands at Home, and make it their Business to appear Good to every Body but their own Wives.

Lovew. And must I care for such an Owl ? Must I humour such a Fop in every thing ? Must I obey a Fool, who cannot command his Passions, and thinks a Wife was given him as the Brutes of the Creation ; only to *Enter Clerimont,* serve him ? No help me *Reason, who stands between* and neither *Clerimont,* nor any *Lovewit unseen.* Man living shall ever boast of my Ruin.

Cler. Why so Angry, Madam ? What , a Philosopher, and Passionate ?

Lovew. Were I as angry as you pretend, Sir, I could perhaps, find Reasons to justify my Resentment ; a Heart unfaithful and inconstant, is a Monster in Love, as well as Morality.

Cler. Can you call that Infidelity, Madam, which was occasion'd by your Sights ? 'Tis true, the Sacrifice you disdain'd, I have since offer'd to another, but still 'tis not I forsook you, 'tis you dismiss'd me.

Lovew. If I deferr'd to Crown your Wishes, 'twas only because you were not indifferent to me ;

me; I hoped Time would have improved your Love to the Purity and Perfection of mine, but but your Thoughts, I find, cannot keep themselves free from the filthy Commerce of the Flesh, nor your Soul relish the ravishing Pleasures of the Union of Two Hearts, when the Body, that nauseous nasty Thing, does not come in for a Share.

Cler. It is my Misfortune, Madam, to be sensible that I have a Body as well as a Soul; your refin'd Love is a Piece of Philosophy too high for me to comprehend, and my Senses stick a little too close to me, to leave it in my Power to shake 'em off.

Lovew. Oh! what a strange sort of Love you Men are for! Surely 'twas design'd for Brutes only, Creatures inspir'd by a Soul Divine should, methinks, raise themselves higher, and not suffer the sweet and fruitful Imagination of Pleasure to be filthily drown'd in an impure and beastly Enjoyment.

Cler. Platonick-Love, Madam, does not agree with my Constitution; my Body is a Rebel, and will not always be subject to the Empire of the Mind, I cannot help it.

Lovew. Well then, since there is no other Way, since your Brutish Sentiments must carry it against the Purity of my Reasons, since none but Carnal Fetters will bind you, endeavour to get my Mother's Consent, I'll try if I can prevail with my Philosophy.

Cler. No, Madam, it is now too late, had this kind Intention of yours —

Catch. I told you as much, dear Niece, but you would not believe me.

Cler. My Heart Madam, is no more in my Power.

Catch. I know that well enough.

Lewew.

Lovew. If your Heart, Sir, is not in your Power, mine is, and I had rather pierce it, than throw it away on one, who does not understand the Value of it.

[*Exit.*

Catch. Poor Niece! she might have saved her self all this fretting—— I pity the Child with all my Heart—— Come, *Clerimont*, the Time of Ceremony is now over, you may speak more freely, I give you leave.

Cler. Speak, Madam! I have nothing to say, but only, that I must take my leave of you, I have a little Business with Sir *Maurice* within.

Catch. I see you are an exact Lover, afraid of breaking any of your Mistress's Commands: 'Tis true, I forbid you this Morning to Express your self too passionately, but your Modesty Conquers me: Speak your Heart; do, I will not be Angry.

Cler. I vow, Madam; all your Words are Riddles to me.

Catch. Nay *Clerimont*, can you think me stupid to that Degree, as not to discern your Passion for me; believe me, there can be no Shame in Adoring such Beauty as mine; you are not the first by a thousand that has counted it an Honour to die for this Face.

Cler. Why all this Fustian to me Madam? I am neither blind, nor ready to be begg'd for a Fool.

Catch. I see you are a bashful Lover; and to give you the greatest Instance of my Condescension that ever Mortal boasted of, I will save you the Ceremony of a Declaration, and take it for granted, that you die for me; is it not so, *Clerimont*?

Cler. I protest, Madam, I know nothing of it—— How shall I get rid of this Devil?

[*Aside.*

Well, Madam, since nothing else will satisfy you

you, and a Declaration you must have, give me Time till to Morrow, and I'll desire no more.

Catch. [*Afide*] This is Formality, I'm sure meer Formality, nothing else. I know He must come to it at last, whether he will or no — But come, so far I must gratify a Lover. Adieu, *Clerimont*; dear *Clerimont*, adieu till to Morrow; I mean, if you can live till then. [*Ex.*

Clerimont. [*Solus.*] Surely angry Heaven could not have plagued Mankind with a greater Curse, than these fauning, greedy, preying Catchats of our Age, Fond, and Libidinous Monsters, who Proud when Young, turn Wanton in their Decline; and Nature now revenging her self upon 'em, they are at last devoured by that Fire they refused to quench before. But I must in, lest the Fool comes, and surprizes me before I have seen my Angel.

Enter Mariana to Clerimont as he is going in.

Cler. O Charming *Mariana*! you are as welcome to me, as the Sun to a Traveller after a Storm; I have been set upon by Two loving, persecuting Devils, who, without any Mercy, would have robbed you of my Heart, but I'll defend it for you, as long as it affords me Life to do it.

Mar. I trust too much to your Honour and Constancy to fear any Rival; but there is a more dangerous Enemy alarms my Love, my Mother-in-Law, who, like a Fury, was just now haunting Sir *Maurice*, to fret and torment him into Compliance,

Cler. As you trust to my Constancy, fair *Mariana*, trust also to my Care and Diligence, the witty Wife shall not hector long, the Plot is ripe, and the faithful

faithful couple, *Trap* and *Ency*, bid me not doubt of success.

Mar. But as to the Directions you sent me in your Note.

Cler. You know 'tis both to make our selves sport with the *Cambridge Ninnny*, and to remove the Brute; put on for once the Vizor of a Coquet and you shall see rare play.

Mar. Were it not to secure *Clerimont* to my Wishes, I could never have prevail'd with my self to bestow one kind Word, or smiling Look on his Rival.

Cler. This is the only time, Madam I shall ever ask you to dissemble.

Mar. Then let him come when he will, I'll play the Jesuit for once; and while I throw away fond Speeches upon him, direct my Intention to you.

Cler. But here comes the Booby ———

Enter Witless, who affects to look sullen, and places himself between Clerimont and Mariana.

Cler. You see, Sir, I am here before hand with you; but, I vow my waiting for you did not at all seem tedious to me: Mrs *Meamwell* is so transported at the thoughts of her approaching Happiness, that she could not forbear telling me a thousand pretty things of her Love, or boasting pleasantly, how blessed she should soon be in a Husband.

Witl. Perhaps so. ——— [*Looking grum upon her.*]

Mar. What, you a Lover, Sir! and so long from your Mistress?

Witl. Softly, softly, Madam! [*To Cler.*] She comes on rarely.

Cler. Did not I tell you, Sir?

I

Mar.

Mar. [*Looking on Cler.*] Oh! how ravish'd, how transported am I! to see the Man my Heart adores; I would not change for an Empire the Blessing of so charming a sight.

With. to *Cler.* Oddzookers! how brisk she is, she takes Fire in a Moment.

Cler. Stand upon your Guard, Sir; stand upon your Guard, I say.

Mar. Oh! I see Love playing in his Eyes, and little Cupids hid in every Smile.

With. By the University, she is Romantick!

Mar. [*Looking on Cler.*] Oh! how impatiently do I live, till I am yours.

With. 'Dlife, she begins to grow uneasy!

Cler. No doubt of it, Sir.

Mar. to *Cler.* Desert my Happiness, no longer if you love me, you are sure of my Heart; why should you desire any further Tryal of my Constancy?

With. Hold, Lady Pert, hold, not so quick, I pray, I am not the Fool you imagine; thank our Stars, the *Witlesses* are noted in the World for Brains; I won't be caught, not I.

Mar. What means my dear Heart, why so alarmed?

With. What do I mean, say you? I mean, that you shan't make a Cuckold of me, by the University you shan't.

Mar. Bless me! why such Discourse, my pretty Fool?

With. Fool your self — That's all, forsooth; I did not know you before, but I am pretty well informed now what you are, I'll not marry a Coquet, not I — [*To Cler.*] There I touch'd her Master.

Mar.

Mar. to *Cler.* Oh! 'tis all in vain, I love none but you, and none but you will I ever have.

Witl. Stop there, says *Tim*, I'll take care of that Miss, the *Witlesses* shall never Reproach me for bringing Infamy into their Honourable Family.

Mar. [Making as if she were crying.] Oh! I can hold no longer, you are too barbarous, — Tygers are not more Unnatural than you are.

Cler. to *Witl.* Why so severe upon the Lady, Sir? — I am sorry now, I was the Occasion of this, I protest I am.

Witl. Let her cry, what's that to me? Look you, Master, *Marcus Tullius Hudibras* says, that Women's Tears are like the Crocodile's, shed only, to pity Fools into Ruin.

Cler. But, Sir, Methinks the tenderness of the Sex —

Witl. Sweet Mr. *Le Caper*, let her blubber out her Venom. Did you never hear the saying of the Wise-Man in *Plutarch*; When Dogs fall a snarling, Serpents a Hissing, and Women a Crying, the First means to bite, the Second to sting, and the Third to deceive?

Mar. Sir, your Suspicions do me an Injury.

Witl. I'll take care, Mrs. *Liquorish*, your Frolicks shall do me none.

Mar. But won't you hear me, Mr. *Witless*?

Witl. Hear you! no — I'll have nothing to do with you, my Soul abhors you. Farewel coqueting, cheating, canting, cozening Flirt, farewel to you for ever. *Exit.*

Mar. And farewel to you, my dear Fool.

Cler. You have acted your Part to a Miracle, the Coxcomb seems to be pretty well cured of his Love; however, for fear of a Relapse, I'll Encourage honest *Trap* to go on in his Projects.

Enter Sir Maurice disturbed, and in a Fright.

Sir Maur. Oh! are you there?

Cler. Well, Sir, have your Arguments prevailed? May I flatter my self with the hopes that your Lady —

Sir Maur. Oh! my Wife is a Devil, a very Devil, Sir; she uses Magick on my Conscience, it cannot be otherwise when I am from her, — no Man has more Courage than I, I feel my self full of Spirit and Resolution, but I am no sooner got to her again, but three of her Words, like a Spell, turn me into a Coward; I tried but just now, and as she spoke, I protest methought, I heard Hell roaring, I ran away for fear.

Cler. This Devil might be resisted, Sir, — if you would.

Mar. O dear, Sir! will you then give over? Will you leave your helpless Daughter exposed thus to —

Sir Maur. What would you have me do? You would not have me encounter Hell surely, would you? O Citizens, Citizens! how much better for a Wife is a quiet Fool, than a witty Scold! [*Perceiving Lady M. coming out, starts on a sudden.*] Alack, alack, the Storm is a coming — — Do you but stand in that corner, and you'll see how she plays the Devil.

Enter Lady Meanwell, thrusting out Lucy.

Lady M. Be gone, Trapes, be gone, and be never so daring, as to shew your Face in my House again.

Sir Maur. Alack, alack! she is come to conjure, I see a Devil before me already.

Mar.

Mar. What's the matter now, *Lucy*?

Lucy. You may ask my Lady, for she turns me away, and will not tell me why.

Sir Maur. Come, my dear Angel, my Paradise, don't be so severe to *Mariana's* Maid, she is a good Servant, you know.

Lady M. How now, *Solomon* of the City, will you offer to take her part?

Sir Maur. Oh Lord! not at all, my Dear, I only ask what it is she has done.

Lady M. What? Am I then to give Reasons for what I do?

Sir Maur. I do not say you are, my Jewel.

Lady M. I will not be contradicted, *Sir Maurice*, you know it well enough.

Sir Maur. I find it so, my Honey-suckle, but if you love me, let me hear what's her Fault; has she by chance broke some of your fine *China*, I can buy more for you.

Lady M. What a pitiful Fancy is there, as if so trivial a thing could discompose my Morals.

Sir Maur. Then 'tis something of great Moment I see, has she stolen some of your Plate?

Lady M. That were but a Trifle.

Sir Maur. Oh! Oh! Mrs *Lucy*, have you plaid the Thief, and pawned her Jewels?

Lady M. A great deal worse still.

Sir Maur. Worse still, say you? Then she has defiled my House, it must be so! Oh the Baggage!

Lady M. All this were nothing in comparison of that horrid, scandalous, and exorbitant Offence she is guilty of; hear it, *Sir Maurice*, since you have such a Mind to it, and excuse her if you can with an Impudence beyond Example, and a shew of Ignorance that cannot be parallel'd in History; she had just now the ill Manners to say in my hearing,
That

That Cowley, the wretched Cowley, was as good a Poet, as the incomparable Sir Maggot Fingle.

Sir Maur. And is this all? Heaven be thank'd, I thought she had at least set my House on Fire, or ravish'd my Butler.

Lady M. What's this mighty Wonder now? Is a Crime of this Nature a slight Matter think you?

Mar. With Submission to the Wits, Madam, I do not conceive such a Fault as this is punishable by the Laws of England; besides, I never knew before, that my Maid was hired to admire Sir Maggot Fingle.

Lady M. How now, little Mushroom? Are you one of her Advocates too? I shall indeed mind your pretty Reasons.

Lovew. You'll want your faithful Confidant, Sister.

Mar. I hope there will be no need of a Confidant soon.

Lady M. I understand your Meaning, pretty Miss, but your Business is done, I can assure you, — Sir Maurice, I expect Sir Timothy here this Evening to seal the Writings, be you in the Way — [To Mariana] And you that have hitherto controul'd my Will, shew your self refractory now if you dare.

Mar. My Father's Commands shall ever be a supream Law to me.

Lady M. Then you're to learn, Mrs. Lackwit, that it must be my Husband's Will, since it is my Pleasure: Hold your impertinent Tongue, I say; I am weary of your Nonsense — Sir Maurice, I'll in, and give Orders for the Wedding, as I shall think fit in my Wisdom — [To Lovewit] You Daughter, send immediately to Mr. Engros, not to fail at the Hour appointed. [Exit Lady M.]

Lovew.

Lovew. I am forry, Sister, Fortune proves so cross to your Wishes; this World is full of Disappointments, [Exit Lovew.]

Sir Maur. [To Clerimont coming from the Corner where he stood listening] Now you see it very plain, I hope, that she is a Witch, my Heart trembled every Word she spoke. What do ye think on't? tell me freely, is she not an Enchantress? A Pox of a Philosopher for a Wife, who the Devil would marry a Wit.

Cler. 'Tis more her Noise than her Wit keeps you in Awe, Sir; raise but your Voice louder than hers when she offers to speak, and you'll silence her, I warrant you.

Mar. [Kneeling] Oh, dear Sir! on my Knees let me intreat you, do not abandon me to her unreasonable Humour, make Use of your Power, you may do it, 'tis nothing but Goodness, too much Goodness in you makes her thus Haughty and Imperious.

Lucy. I vow, Sir, all the Neighbourhood cries out Shame upon you.

Sir Maur. I am as desirous to have her Will opposed in this as any of You can be; but what can I do? How shall I deal with a Devil, that can at her Pleasure, send a Legion of Evil Spirits to haunt and tear me a-Pieces.

Cler. With all her Spells, and Magick Art, Sir; take my Word, your Lady can raile but one Evil Spirit, and that's her own; but if you dare to put on a good Resolution, and follow my Directions, we'll conquer that Evil Spirit I warrant you.

Mar. Once more, good Sir, try what you can do, the Happiness of your own Child depends upon it — take Pity of my Love.

Lucy.

Lucy. Come, Sir, pluck up a Courage, stand up on your Prerogative.

Sir Maur. [*Cocks his Hat.*] Well — If you'll second me, I'll in, and let her know who is her Master.

Cler. Well said.

Sir Maur. Tell her, that none ought to Rule in my Family but I.

Cler. Vigorously spoken.

Sir Maur. Declare to her that you must be my Son in Law, and no body else.

Cler. Kindly and Bravely resolv'd.

Sir Maur. And that if she offers to contradict me, I'll shut her up.

Lucy. In Bedlam, I hope.

Sir Maur. Come then, follow me All, and be sure to stand by me.

Cler. Don't you fear it, Sir. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE Changes to Sir Timothy's Lodgings.

Enter Trap and Huff.

Trap. Look ye Roger, Fifty Pounds is the Sum, and the Task but easie, for the Man is both a Fool and a Coward.

Huff. Honest Jack, let me alone with him; you know I'd hang my own Father for half the Money, but where's the Woman?

Trap. Oh! Leave that Part to me; I'll produce her in good Time: — But here comes the Property, put on your Bloody Looks. [*Enter Wit.*]
[*Trap seeing his Master coming, alters the Tone of his Voice*] I'll tell you, Sir, my Master is a Man of Honour.

Huff.

Huff With all my Heart, Sir.

Trap. A Man of Courage, Sir.

Huff. All the better, Sir, all the better.

Trap. That has learnt to fence a whole Week, and shewn his Valour against the boldest Prentices in Cambridge.

Huff. [*Draws and thrusts at Random, making as if he did not see Witlefs, who sneaks behind Trap*] His Valour! B'ood and Thunder! Let me see him. Oons would I had him here — There, at his Heart — There, under his second Rib, — Curse on the ill Luck, I han't kill'd a Man these three Days, and my Arm grows stiff for want of Exercise.

Trap. Pray Sir, Good Sir, be not so furious if you can help it; My Master is a Gentleman understands Reason as well as any Body; He'll give you all the Satisfaction you can desire, I'm sure; but pray put up, Sir, put up, let me intreat you.

Huff. [*Puts up his Sword.*] Well, Sir, Let's hear what 'tis you have to say?

Trap. I say, Sir, That this Gentleman here is my Master, and can give you the best Answer.

Huff. Humh, Sir, are you the Man they call Mr. *Witlefs*?

Witlefs. At your Service, good Sir, Honourable Sir.

Huff. Service! Blood and Thunder! 'Tis Justice I'll have, and no Service.

Trap. Pray, Sir, Moderate your Passion.

Huff. Impertinent Varlet! hold thy peace, I charge you — [*To Witlefs*] To be plain Sir, this is my business with you; You have dishonoured my Family, and I must have your Blood for it.

K

Witl.

Witlefs. I Sir! I proteſt I do not know you! I beg your pardon! ——— Alas, alas, *Jack*!

Huff. Not know me, Blood and Thunder! perhaps ſo; but you know a Relation of mine, and with a Pox to you, you have known her to good purpoſe.

Witl. *Trap*, Dear *Trap*. what's this? Can you gueſs what it is the Gentleman means?

Trap. Not I, by *Ferico*; I am thinking all this while, what can be the Meaning of all this ſtuff.

Huff. Blood and Thunder! What muſt you ſtand their asking one another Questions; I tell you Sir, there are two Ways and no more, either you muſt Marry my Cozen, whom you have after a moſt Felonious manner impregnated, or elſe give me leave to cut your Throat preſently.

Witlefs. O Sweet Sir, Gracious Sir, look upon me; I am not the Man you take me for.

Huff. Blood and Thunder! don't you think I'll be put off with a Story; I'll have every drop of thy Blood before I'll ſuffer mine to be ſtain'd: Here is a Paper you muſt Sign, or by *Lucifer* the next Word you ſpeak, for a denial, I'll make the whole Firmament ſhine through your Liver. [*Witlefs reads the Paper.*]

Trap. But kind honey Sir, is there no way to accomodate ———

Huff. What more Questions, you Pragmatical Dog, I'll order you.

Trap. I mean no harm to you Good Sir, but methinks ———

Huff. Impudent Sycophant, I'll nail thy prating Tongue to the Wall.

Witl. Good ſweet obliging Sir, may I ſpeak two Words with my Man.

Huff. Be ſhort, Rot you be ſhort.

Witl.

Witl. [To Trap *aside.*] Look ye *Jack*, this scurvy Paper is nothing less than a promise of Marriage in Blank; for aught I know I may be Married one of these days to some filthy *Succubus*; He threatens to Kill me if I don't Sign it; what must I do *Jack*, Speak, what must I do?

Trap. Do? That's a pretty Question indeed; Rather dye a thousand times and more, than consent to such Infamy; This is some Impudent trick I Warrant it, the huffing Rascal has some Strumpet or other whom he has a mind to put off; Fight it out for shame ——— [Draws] I'll stand by you Sir.

Witl. [Draws, gets behind Trap and thrusts over his Shoulder.] Then Trap be stout; Come, you Blood and Thunder, here is my Answer for you.

Huff. Are you for that sport then? Have at you.

Witl. Push, on O brave *Jack*, push on.

Trap. [Thrusts.] Don't you fear Sir, spare him not ——— At his Heart directly if you can.

Huff. You Pander, stand off, or by the Bloody Bones of *Dagon*, this Steel shall make it self a passage to his Heart through yours.

Trap. I Scorn your Words Sir, I'll dye upon the spot, rather than forsake my good Master; Thrust on Sir, Thrust on, we'll Swinge him I warrant you.

Huff. Then Villain, take this ——— [Trap falls as if [To Witless] Now for you Sir. ——— he were Wound'd.

Witless. [On his Knees.] Oh Sir! Valiant Sir, put up I beseech you, I'll do any Thing, I'll sign any Paper, I'll Marry any Body.

Huff. I am very glad, Sir, to see you come to reason, for I have a great Esteem for you, and 'twould have gone against my Heart, I vow, to kill a Gentlemen who is to be my near Relation;

here is the Paper, Sir, be pleased to set your Hand to it, I love to be Civil.

Witl. Ay Sir, But if the Lady ———

Huff. Blood and Thunder! What more reasoning yet ———

Witl. Oh! No Sir, give me, give me ———

[Witlefs signs the Paper, and gives it to Huff.

There Sir ——— Alas, alas! ———

Huff. Now dear Cozen *Witlefs*, your most humble Servant; I esteem my self very happy in the Honour of your Alliance. *[Exit.*

Witl. Pox of his Honour, — By the University I'm in a fine Pickle, bound to Marry a Witch for ought I can tell; and my Honest, my Faithful, my Fighting *Trap* Murdered.

Trap. *[Lifting his Head.]* Bless me, Sir, is the Man gone?

Witl. Oh Fortune! *Trap* alive?

Trap. *[Rises.]* Ay Alive, and Unhurt, I hope.

Witl. How! Unhurt, *Jack*; Did not I see you fall Dead upon the place?

Trap. No, on my Word, Sir, 'twas only a certain Giddiness takes me at the sight of a Naked Sword; 'tis an infirmity I had from my Youth.

Witl. Pray feel *Jack* if I am Wounded; I may be Killed for ought I know.

Trap. Nay you are in the Right, for in the heat of Fighting 'tis seldom Wounds are felt, can you Whistle, let's hear. ——— *[Witlefs whistles in a ridiculous manner.*
That's well, Sir, Now let me see you Jump three times for the *[Jumps three times.*
three Kingdoms. Oh rare! I warrant you Living, and as sound as a Roach; but pray now, what have you done about the Paper, the Cursed Paper.

Witl.

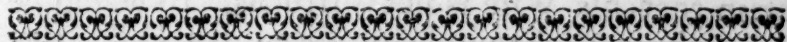
Witl. Oh ! The Villain made me set my Hand to it ; I thought, *Jack*, 'twas better doing so, than be butchered by that Turk, and Infidel ; His very Looks are enough to fright one out of one's Life, I vow as he stood thrusting at us, methought I saw Death and Massacre peeping out of the Corners of his Eyes ; but I'll be even with him, I warrant him, for before *Sir Timothy* can hear of this, I'll to my Uncle in the *Temple*, and hang the Rogue.

Trap. Pray while his Hand is in, let him dispatch the Lady in Blank too, for if the Jade be once hanged, no Law in *England* can oblige you to marry her. ✓

Witl. Well considered Faith ; follow me *Jack* ; and let's lose no Time. *Exit.*

Trap. By no means Sir.

*Hanging will fail I know, but I decree,
The Marriage-Knot shall more successful be ;
And of these Two the Destinies have told,
No Matter which, so Either of 'em hold.*



A C T V.

Sir Maurice's House.

Sir Timothy Witlefs, and Young Witlefs.

Witl. **B**UT, Sir, a Coquet, a French Coquet, the Word frights me ; She'll have too much Mettle for me : I shall be a Cuckold by the University I shall. *Sir*

Sir Tim. I have known your Mistress from a Child, *Tim*, and I am satisfied with my Choice; take this from me, Young Man, there is more Innocency in that brisk, pleasant, and free Humour of hers, than in the fullen, rigid, and severe Temper of many of her Sex, who thinking their Character secures 'em even from the Suspicion of Vice, blind and deceive the World with a false Appearance of Virtue, only to play their Under-game the more securely.

Witl. But, Sir, is there no certain Compass for a Man to steer by upon the stormy Sea of Matrimony, without splitting against the Rock of Cuckoldom?

Sir Tim. There is no certain Rule for it, *Tim*; however, let me give you this Advice, Love your Wife heartily and sincerely, be Kind and Faithful to her, and do not starve her Longings: This is the best Rule I know to keep her honest.

Witl. 'Dslife! must a Husband then be bound to his good Behaviour?

Sir Tim. Yes certainly; for 'tis the most unaccountable Thing in the World for a Man to complain that his Wife is not Virtuous, to whom he gives the worst Example for Vice; her Disloyalty cannot be justified that's true; but still his Anger is Unreasonable. Look to your self *Tim* when you come to be Married, for o' my Conscience 'tis a dangerous Thing to provoke a Wife, who has always a Revenge at hand.

Witl. But, Sir, I may be kind to my Wife, and yet a Cuckold, what then?

Sir Tim. Oh! In that case Boy, you must, like a Wife Alderman, put your Hands into your Pockets and Whistle.

Witl. Zookers! and is this all?

Sir

Sir Tim. No *Tim*, there is still this Comfort left you, that the *Horners* of the Town make some Conscience of their Way, and are not quite so bad as Thieves and Robbers, who plunder and go away with all; No, the Gentlemen are mannerly, I must say that for 'em, for if they by chance break in, they take but just as much as will serve their Turn, and always leave enough for a Man.

Witl. Mercy, Sir! commend me to good Breeding; but still my Honour Sir, my Honour: can your mannerly Gentlemen take it away by Bits and Halves too.

Sir Tim. Honour Boy is but the Vulgar Error of Jealousie, or the Bugbear of a Sick Fancy; make no noise *Tim* and all may be well, for to my Knowledge many Men go for Cuckolds in the World, who are not really so, and many are deeply so, who have not the Reputation of it. ——— But here come the Ladies.

Enter Lady Meanwell, Catchat, Lovewit, and Engross, with Writings.

Lovew. Come Mr. *Engross*, you must change your rude and barbarous Stile, and put these Articles of Marriage into more Rhetorical Language; try if you can flourish them a little with a few Passages out of *Parthenissa*, *Grand Cyrus*, or so.

Engross. Our Stile, Madam, is like the Laws of the *Medes* and *Persians*, unalterable.

Catch. Your Custom is a strange Tyrant sure, methinks you might at least be so Gentile, as to date after the *Roman* manner, by Ides and Calends.

Engross. This is a Contract between *English* Parties, and no *Romans*, Madam, You confound me.

Catch.

Catch. But for all you Mr. *Engross*, when I Marry, which I know will be soon now, I'll have all my Writings drawn in Hieroglyphicks, and some *Egyptian Priest*, or *Brachman of India* to perform the Office.

Engross. Faith, Lady, those Gentlemen live a great Way off, and if you stay for a Husband, till their Arrival, your Virginity will deserve a Place in the *Oxford Musæum*, among the Pieces of Antiquity.

Enter Sir Maurice, Clerimont, and Mariana.

Cler. [To *Sir Maur.*] Remember, Sir, that your Wife is but a Woman, a meer Woman, and no Devil, no Enchantress.

Sir Maur. I'll order her, I warrant you, do but observe me.

Maria. Consider, Dear Sir, I am undone if she prevails.

Sir Maur. Don't you fear it, Child.

Lovew. [To *Catch.*] I cannot but admire at my Sister's fancy; that she should bring in *Clerimont*, to be a Witness of his Rival's Triumph.

Catch. You are mistaken still in *Clerimont*, Niece, he is carrying on another Intrigue than People imagine; I say little, but the thing will soon come out.

Lady M. Are you ready Mr. *Engross*?

Engross. I want only the Names of the Parties; which is the Bride pray?

Lady M. Here Sir, my Daughter-in-Law.

Sir Maur. Very well her Name is *Mariana*, Sir,
[*Engross* writes,

Engross. Now for the Bridegroom.

Lady M. Here's the Gentlemen, Sir, Mr. *Timothy Witlefs*.
Sir

Sir *Maur.* And I say here's the Gentleman, Sir,
Mr. *Charles Clerimont.*

Engross. Hey day! Two Husbands to one Wife,
that's more than the Law allows, though perhaps
no more than a Woman could very well dispense
withal.

Lady *M.* [*To Engross.*] Why do you regard
what other People say, Mr. *Engross*?

Sir. *Maur.* [*To Engross*] Did I not Name *Cleri-*
mont to you? what makes you stare?

Engross. Uddsbud! agree among your selves if
you will, I'll go no furtherelse.

Witl. [*aside.*] What a Pox, my Dancing Master
my Rival; Old Sir *Maurice* sure, has a mind to
make himself merry with him.

Enter Trap, who takes Sir Timothy aside.

Trap. There's a Lady and a Gentleman below,
Sir, have earnest business with you.

Sir *Tim.* Surely thou art mad, couldst not thou
tell 'em I was abroad.

Trap. Oh Sir! You never saw such a Man in
your Life, I'm sure; I told him a thousand times
at least, that you were here about business of great
Importance; but he very rudely clap'd a
Pistol to my Breast, and Swore I was a dead Man,
if I did not bring him to you immediately.

Sir *Tim.* What can this mighty business be? —
With Sir *Maurice's* leave bring 'em in.

Sir *Maur.* [*To Engross.*] Come make an end,
Mr. *Engross*, do as I bid you, for I have past my
Word, and won't be an Ass.

[*Sir Timothy walks about the Door Huff*
and the Lady are to come in at.

L

Lady *M.*

Lady M. And so have I, Sir Maurice, and I won't be a Goose, but since there is no remedy, and my will I must have in spite of your Teeth, my Daughter here shall disengage your Word, the Gentleman, if he knows how to value Wit, will thank me sure for this Piece of Condescension.

Cler. Your Daughter, Madam, may be a Miracle of Wit and Beauty, but still I cannot but glory in owning to you, that I had rather dye a thousand times than renounce my Love.

Catch. [*aside.*] They might have proposed one to him, I know, would have been more acceptable.

Lovew. [*To Cler.*] There was no need for you, Sir, to put your self to the Expence of so fiery a protestation ; I am not in so desperate a condition yet, as to rob my Sister of her few Admirers.

Cler. I shall never desire, Madam, to put you to the tryal.

Enter Huff and Lucy disguised like a great belly'd Woman, Sir Tim. and Huff seem to argue very hotly at the Entrance.

Huff. [*Breaks from Sir Timothy, and comes towards the Company.*] An Impostor! Blood and Thunder! I an Impostor! We shall try that, by Lucifer we shall.

Sir Maur. Pray, Sir, what's the matter? why in such a Passion?

Huff. [*blowing.*] Sir I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon ; You look like a Gentleman, and though a Stranger to me I'll not scruple to make you a Judge between Sir Timothy, and this disconsolate Lady: Let me but compose my self

self a little, for his
rudeness has strange
ly disordered me.

[*While Huff is speaking,*
Lucy falls a hugging and
caressing Witlefs.

Lucy. O sweet Honey ! Cream of my Joys, have
I found thee at last, I must Hugg thee ; I must
Buss thee till my Lips ake.

Witl. Away, Satan, away ; I know thee not.

Lucy, O dear pretty smiling Rogue, how I Love
thee ! How Charmingly thou lookest ; I vow thou
wert unkind not to write to me, I must Kifs thee
for that too.

Witl. By the University, the Women of this
Town are as hot as Hell-Fire.

Huff. [*To Sir Maurice.*] I shall not trouble you,
Sir, with a long Story ; the Gentlewoman you see
here, is a near Relation of mine, who lived in
Cambridge ; She always had the reputation of as
Modest and Virtuous a Lady as ever the Town
bred, but her Eyes having the fatal Luck to boyl
Mr. *Witlefs's* Blood into a Ferment, the young
Gentleman would never be satisfied without a
full Enjoyment of her Unfortunate Body : She
held out a great while, the poor Creature, but the
Devil being Powerful, and Female Flesh, Frail
and Willing, she was forced to Capitulate, and
surrender the Fort of her Honour upon Articles ;
to be short Sir, he gave her a promise of Marriage :
Now hearing he was to be Married to ano-
ther, I made bold to intrude my self, the business
being of such consequence, as will I hope Apologize
for the freedom.

Witl. [*aside to Sir Timothy.*] I assure you Sir. 'tis
an Impudent Lie, the fellow has told, examine
into the business a little, and you shall see.

Sir Maur. [*To Huff.*] Oddsnig ! There was no
need, Sir of Apologie for your coming ; you are

most welcome, I promise you, make the most you can of your Business.

Sir Tim. [To *Huff*.] Sir. may I speak two words with you?

Huff. Ay, Sir, with all my Heart.

Sir. Tim. You talk of a Promise of Marriage under my Son's Hand, where is that Promise, pray, where is it?

Huff. Not far Sir ——— [To *Lucy*.] Come Cofin, produce your Title to Mr. *Witlefs* his Body.

Lucy. I have two Sir, ——— [Pulls out a Paper which she gives to *Sir Tim.*] There is one of 'em. ——— The other is forth coming.

Sir Tim. [Shewing the Paper to *Witl.*] *Tim.* is this your Hand? Look?

Witl. Yes, Sir, so far I own.

[*Sir Tim.* reads to himself.

Sir Maur. 'Sdlife! What will come of this pretty Story, there would be a Wonder now, Ladies, should a Scholar prove a Fornicator like other Men.

Sir Tim. Oh the filthy Monster! Is this your Cambridge Breeding with a Pox?

Witl. I protest Sir, I am innocent, I never lay with a Woman in my Life ——— but twice

Every Time *Witlefs* goes about to vindicate himself, *Huff* lays his Hand upon his Sword, which makes him to recant.

Sir Tim. But twice with a Rope to you! What would you do it a thousand Times?

Witl. I swear by both the Proctors of the University, I never attempted any thing upon the Sex ——— without their Consent.

Sir Maur. Now Lady, surely here is a lawful Impediment with a Vengeance, why Mr. *Witlefs* should not be joyn'd in Matrimony to my Daughter.

Sir

Sir Tim. I'll examine the Woman — [*To Lucy.*]
Pray Mistress, where did you first know my Son?

Lucy. Your Son, Sir, knew me first at *Cambridge*.

Sir Tim. Did he visit you often, Mistress?

Lucy. Not often; but when he did, 'twas to some Purpose I assure you, the last Time he carried me to *Trumpington*, there he Feasted me, Good Man, I never saw him so wanton in my Life.

Sir Tim. *Trumpington*! Oh that Damn'd Town! It lies upon the Road to Hell; I lost my Maiden-head there before I knew I had one — But pray how far are you gone Mistress?

Lucy. My Reckoning, Sir as one may say, is from *Sturbitch-Fair*, we had a Merry-meeting there, I assure you, I shall remember it as long as I live.

Sir Tim. Oh, 'tis too true! I'll ask no more Questions; I remember now I sent him his Quarterege about that Time, it must be so; Oh the Villain!

Sir Maur. Now Witty Females; what have you to say to this? You may brag of your Scholars indeed.

Catch. Brother, this Failure of the Flesh is a Natural Propensity, against which our Philosophy prescribes no Rules.

Witl. Give me Leave, Sir, but to speak now in my Defence; and I'll warrant you I'll make it as plain as any thing — [*Huff laying his Hand on his Sword*] that I have nothing to say against what the Gentleman spoke before.

Sir Tim. Hold thy Peace then, silly Puppy — [*To Trap aside*]; Look ye honest *Trap*, I have given you Warning, that's true, but thou art a Civil Fellow; I'll keep thee, if thou canst do me a piece of Service.

Trap.

Trap. Oh Sir! Do you question my Zeal? You wrong me I vow, were I to be dismissed next Minute, I would part with you like a Christian; pray what's the Business, Sir?

Sir Tim. You see, *Trap*, this unlucky Wench is like to spoil my Son's Match, I would have you take the Man to your self, and try what you can do with him. If a Present of Five hundred Guineas will satisfy him, I'll give it freely; in the mean while, I'll make Sir *Maurice* believe, 'twas only a Mistake.

Trap. Do you but look well to your Part, Sir, and trust me with mine, and I'll warrant you, Things will go swimmingly on our side.

[*Trap takes Huff aside, they make as if they were arguing together.*]

Sir Tim. [*To Sir Maur.*] All this Story, Sir *Maurice*, proves at last nothing but a Mistake; the Man took my Son for one *Jeremy Witless* of *Bristol*, now listed in *Flanders*.

Lady M. I thought indeed, a Man of *Greek* and *Latin* was above those Infirmities.

Huff. Blood and Thunder, [*Walks backward and forward between Trap and the Company.*] Five hundred Guineas! I'll hang the whole Generation of 'em before I take Six Thousand Pounds. What, for pitiful Five hundred Pounds sell the Honour of my Family!

Sir Maur. Sir *Timothy*, what's the Matter now with the Gentleman? He makes a Noise, and talks, I think, of Six thousand Pounds.

Sir Tim. The poor Man is mad I fancy, that he has miss'd his Prey; I suppose he says, he'd give six thousand Pounds to find him out.

Huff. [*Breaking off from Trap.*] Blood and Thunder, let me go; I'll cut the Throat of Father and Son

Son, or I'll have better Satisfaction before I part.

Enter Meanwell, affecting a great Sadness.

Mean. I am sorry, Brother, I must make of this Day of Joy the most melancholy Day of your Life, by imparting to you the saddest News you could expect.

Sir Maur. Oh Heavens! Brother, what is it?

Mean. Our *Hamburgh* Ship has brought this dismal Account, that *Mynheer Van Dunk* is broke, and ———

Sir Maur. Alas! alas! I am undone, undone for ever, Twenty thousand Pounds at a Clap, I shall not be able to shew my Head.

Mar. Oh the unseasonable Misfortune!

Lady M. Why so concern'd, *Sir Maurice*? What, now your weak and puny Soul must fret, and be disturb'd at this! Thanks to Philosophy, mine is firm and unshaken.

Lovew. My Fortune is safe still; what Love could not do, Interest may--- I'll not despair [*Aside.*

Sir Tim. [*To Witl.*] Oddszookers! the Case is alter'd: Hark ye *Tim.* I have always observ'd, that a Man never thrives in the World that has wrong'd a modest Woman; therefore in point of Interest, as well as Conscience, you must marry this Lady, and as a Penance for your not renouncing the Flesh, Woman, and the Devil, swallow the bitter Cup of Matrimonial Twist.

Witl. I marry that Woman! Sir, I beg your Pardon, I should be Cornuted, and you know 'tis the only thing I hate.

Sir Tim. Good Boy, a Man makes himself ridiculous in the World, that affects Singularity in any

any Thing; you'll be Cuckolded a little before your Time that's true; but 'tis the Fashion now, therefore no Soul living will take Notice of it.

Witl. Is it so upon your Word, Sir? Or do you Jest?

Sir Tim. Ay, *Tim*, upon my honest Word 'tis even so — Cuckoldom is a raging Grievance of the Nation for all my mincing the Matter. Believe me so, as many Men as you see walking in the Streets, are sincerely, many Cuckolds.

Witl. How so, pray? They are not all married sure.

Sir Tim. There is all the Difference, Boy; with those that are married their Business is done, with those that are not; their Business is now doing: It was so with you, and just so 'twill be with them, comfort your self with that.

Witl. I am as glad as any Thing 'tis so, I protest I am, for to tell you the Truth, the Thing disturbed me a little; but since you say 'tis the Mode, I scorn to be singular.

Sir Tim. Besides, *Tim*, Mrs. *Meanwell* has now lost her Fortune, and Beggar for Beggar, 'tis much better for us if you'd marry this good Lady here, for by this means we avoid a chargeable Suit, the Man was talking of no less than 6000 l. Damages; hang him, 6000 l. would undo us —

Witl. By the University, I do not think there is one Thousand Pound difference between an honest Woman, and a Common-One.

Cler. Oh the Brute! what pity 't had been a Woman of Virtue had fallen to the Lot of such a Fool, who does not understand the Value of so great a Treasure. [*Aside.*

Witl. By the Tip of *Plato's* Ear, I am of the Opinion of that famous Poet *Tacitus*, who says,
He

He had rather be Cuckolded by a pretty coaxing Wife, than escape the Dishonour, either thro' the Ugliness, or the surly Virtue of one peevishly Honest.

Huff. Sir *Timothy*, I rejoice to see Things run thus in a right Channel, and to make my Joy compleat, I have but one Favour more to beg of you, *viz.* That Mr. *Witlefs*, and my dear Relation here, may be joyned instantly. for I am commanded with my Regiment for *Flanders* to morrow early, and I should not cross the Sea with a quiet Mind, should I leave this piece of Work unfinished.

Sir Tim. With all my Heart, Sir, but where shall we find an Executioner?

Huff. I have a Levitical Conjuror below, who, with Sir *Maurice's* leave, will give us a Touch of his Black Art.

Sir Maur. My House, Sir, is at your Service.

Sir Tim. What say you to it, *Tim*? Come hang Consideration, the shortest Follies are best.

Witl. Come then, a Pig in a Poke, away to the Conjuror, thou art not the first who has carry'd a great Belly to the Parson.

[*Exeunt Sir Timothy, Witlefs, Huff, and Lucy.*]

Sir Maur. Clerimont, I promised my self a great deal of Happiness in the Honour of your Alliance; but since my Hopes are defeated, and I cannot, in the Circumstances I am in at present, offer poor *Mariana* to you for a Wife; I must thank you for your Civilities to her, and wish you somewhere else Fortune answerable to your Merit.

Cler. You offend me, Sir *Maurice*, with this Discourse: As it was not for her Fortune I courted your fair Daughter, so this Loss shall make no change in me; I love her better than ever I did,

M

all

all I have in the World is hers, and consequently at your Service.

Lovew. Then farewell to my Hopes there, I am put to my last Prayers indeed, but rather than fail I'll make sure of Sir *Maggot Fingle*, his Wit shall be my Excuse. [*Aside.*]

Mar. [*To Cler.*] No, *Clerimont*, you are too Generous, and whatever Violence I do to my Inclination in pronouncing the Words, we must part, Fortune has cross'd my Wishes, and placed my Heart beneath you.

Cler. Oh killing Words! Cruel *Mariana*! do you oppose my Happiness? Who could have suspected it? My Heart was not prepared for so severe a Stroke.

Mar. 'Tis not, *Clerimont*, because I hate you, or love you less; Heaven, that sees into my Breast, knows how pure and sincere is my Love for you, but I am sensible that your Estate requires a present Fortune to make you easie: I wished to be yours, when I had Reason to hope my Father's Kindness would have made us live happily in the World; but since Heaven has decreed otherwise, I must not be so ungrateful to your Love, as to desire to be an Obstacle to your Fortune.

Cler. If you have not a Mind, Divine *Mariana*, to see a sad Lover expire at your Feet, forbear talking any more of Fortune, the whole World without you cannot make me happy, and with you I am richer than the greatest Monarch upon Earth.

Mar. Fortune, which has robb'd me of all my Hopes, could not rob you of my Heart, it is yours, *Clerimont*, in spite of her, and if I owed it all before to your Love, what can I give now to your Generosity?

Cler.

Cler. Your self, Madam, and in you all that this World can gratifie my Ambition withal.

Enter Sir Timothy, Witlefs, Huff, and Lucy.

Witl. [*Leading Lucy, and turning her round.*] I fancy the Sin is worth the owning, the Creature feels as a sound piece of Mortality; 'tis but supposing the first Night we lay together, that we have been marry'd four or five Months, and all is well.

Sir Tim. Good *Tim*, my Mind is now at ease, to see you a Man like my self, and by this Heroick Act of yours do I know you to be of the true Blood of the *Witlefses*, who for these five Generations have outbraved Cuckoldom: Come, thou art a good Boy, and hast a true Notion of the Thing.

Witl. Nay, I think I am as good a Man as I was before; my Leg is as strait now as it was in the Morning, and I find not the least Alteration in my Health; why should I be Melancholly? I see no Cause, not I.

Lucy. This is the Wheel of Fortune, Mr. *Witlefs*; when People boast of Favours they never enjoy'd, they come often to father Children they never got: [*Throws off her Disguise.*] But see, you have better Luck than you deserve.

Sir Tim. Hell and Furies! what have we here?

Lucy, Honest *Lucy*, at your Service, as pure a Virgin as ever was born ——— for all your bragging Mr. *Witlefs* ———

Witl. *Trap*, you *Trap*, by the University thy pretty Sister ——— Oddzooks! 'tis well 'tis no worse.

Trap. I had a pretty Match for her in my Eye, but since Destiny throws her upon you, I'll not contend with your Stars; take her and wear her, she is yours, I hope you'll use her civilly.

Lady M. Sure Sir *Timothy* will not suffer his witty Son to be thus prostituted to an illiterate *Abigail* —

Sir Tim. Not I, by Hell! This is an impudent Cheat, a Trick of that Rascal there, I smook it, but I'll see them all hang'd; I'll to Justice immediately: Justice! Justice! *Exit.*

Witl. You may hang the Rest if you please, Father, but I'll take care to hang this little Rogue my self: Come, dear *Lucy*, thou melting Sugar-loaf of Pleasure, thou art a good Girl, by the University I always loved thee; give me thy Hand, I'll say it once more, thou art my Wife: Let Sir *Timothy* fume, my Mother's Land is Five Hundred Pounds *per Annum*, and that's enough for us: *Hocus Pocus*, thou art a Maid to Day, I'll make thee a Woman to Morrow.

Lucy. So much Justice you owe me I'm sure for your vain Boasting; but look to your self now, I'll be even with you, I warrant you, and turn your Fictions into Real Histories with a Vengeance.

Sir Maur. Now, Lady *Grumble*, are you convinc'd that Mr. *Witless* is not to have my Daughter? Shall we at last have the Favour of your Consent for this Gentleman.

Lady M. No, Sir *Maurice*, not as long as I breathe; what, do you think I'll admit into my Family a Despiser of Wit, one who knows well enough I'm an Author, and never had the Manners to ask me to read any of my Works to him?

Cler. I am not, Madam, such an Enemy to Wit as your Ladyship makes me, I love it but as a Gentleman

Man, without either Pride or Affectation; I could entertain the Company with a small Essay of my own Poetry, a S O N G I made Yesterday, if you could promise your selves Patience enough to hear it.

Lady M. Hear it? Ay, with all our Hearts; who is there to sing it?

S O N G.

L O V E, thou art best of Human Joys,
Our chiefeſt Happineſs below,
All other Pleaſures are but Toys;
Muſick, without Thee, is but Noiſe.
And Beauty but an empty Show.

*Heav'n, who knew beſt, what Man could move,
And raiſe his Thoughts above the Brute,
Said, Let him be, and let him Love,
That, muſt alone his Soul improve.
Howe'er Philoſophers diſpute.*

W. I proteſt the Man writes well enough for a Fidler.

Sir Maur. Oh rare! I hope your Ladyſhip is ſatiſfied now.

Lady M. Yes, *Sir Maurice*, I'm ſatiſfied that that Man muſt be your Son-in-Law; and my Reason for it is, becauſe he is a Ninny and a Booby.

Sir Maur. 'Sdeath! What a *Babel* is here? Where are we now?

Lady M. Where are we, ſay you? In the worſt Place in the World for Manners ſure; what for a Man to be ſo hardy, ſo bold, and ſo deſtitute of Politenefs and Complaiſance, as to affront Philoſophy to my Face, is a Crime never to be attoned

attoned for, however Philosophers dispute quoth he:
That's as much as to say, we are Fools; my Sister,
Daughter, and I, all Fools.

Mean, I never heard my Sister draw a more natural Conclusion in my Life.

Lady M. But I'll revenge Philosophy I'm resolved; and to make an Example of this Uumannerly Composer of Songs, I'll inflict upon him the Curse of a poor silly Portionless Wife. *Sir Maurice*, whether you will or no, that ignorant Songster there shall have your Daughter, his shallow Wit will fit her little Genius, as well as her *Hamburgh* Fortune, his shatter'd Estate.

Cler. Please your self, Madam, with your mean Railleries, I am sensible of nothing but my present Happiness,

Sir Maur. Did not I tell you, *Mariana*, we should carry the Day? I knew well enough I should bring it to pass. Now we are all pleased, I hope.

Mean. Only, poor Sister *Catchat*, she has Reason to take it ill, that in so plentiful a Distribution of Human Flesh, she can catch Nothing, but must at last take up with her Men in the Moon, or her Visions and Chimeras.

Catch. Av, Chimeras; let my Niece look to her self, there Reigns one still in *Clerimont's* Heart will make her live uneasie all her Days, let me tell her that, and so Adieu. [Exit.]

Lady M. Insert this in the Articles, Mr. *Engross*; I charge you, that this illiterate Couple shall never come into my House, I'll not be pester'd with stupid Creatures, not I.

Sir Maur. Not into my House? By my Lord Mayor I'll leave you, *Lady Petulant*, with your Fingles to make Almanacks and Ballads.

Lady

Lady M. Yes, yes, the World shall see how much I value Wit in spite of Fools; *Sir Maggot Jingle* shall be my Son-in-Law, and for the Future none shall be admitted into my House but *Beaus Esprits*; therefore, *Sir Maurice*, think of another Habitation for your self.

Cler. [To *Sir Maur.*] You are Master of my House, Sir, and shall Command in it more Absolutely than you did in your own.

Lady M. The Kindness, Sir, will be seasonable.

Mean. Then since you are pleased so impertinently to insult me, know, Sister, to your Confusion, that the News from *Hamburg* is false, that my Niece's Fortune is not lost, but rather improv'd by a considerable Return. I put this Trick upon you to try your Philosophy, and let the World see to the Bottom of Female Wits.

Sir Maur. Oh, Dear Brother, you revive me! How happy am I, that I have still a Fortune to make a Return to *Clerimont's* Generosity — [To *Cler.*] It is all yours, Sir; give me leave to make the rest of my Life Comfortable in yours, and my Daughter's Company, and retire with you into *Essex*.

Mar. This will compleat my Happiness, Heaven be thank'd: I shall have all I could wish for in this World my Father, and *Clerimont*.

Lady M. And blessed be my Stars, say I, that Ignorance and Wit shall dwell no more together; farewell rude and unpolish'd Crowd: You Witty Daughter of mine, follow me.

[*Exeunt Lady M. and Lovewit.*]

Mean. Brother, let this Day be Celebrated as a Day of Joy and Deliverance to your Family from the Tyrannical and Arbitrary power of a Proud, Scolding, Whimsical, Philosophical Wife:

You

You have now got a Second that will stand by you, I'm sure. Let not therefore an impertinent Female Wit again Usurp so unreasonable an Empire over you.

Sir Maur. I'll make the best of your Advice to be sure; but, good Brother however Easy the Task may seem to one without Experience, take my Word all Married men find it a Difficult one.

*Man first was destin'd for the Sov'reign Sway,
But haughty Woman scorning to Obey,
Call'd to her Beauty's Aid, the Serpent's Art,
Surpris'd his Reason and Insnar'd his Heart.
Since when we struggle for our Right in vain,
Their Tongues and Eyes will still the Rule maintain.*

FINIS.

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